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Buffalo Bill Weekly

DEVOTED TO
FAR WEST LIFE

BUFFALO BILL AND THE PAWNEE PROPHET



NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY

Devoted To



Far West Life

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NEW YORK, January 5, 1918

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Buffalo Bill and the Pawnee Prophet; OR,

PAWNEE BILL AMONG FRIENDS AND FOES.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER I.

A SUSPICIOUS SHOT.

When Buffalo Bill and his pards entered the hotel in Pagoda Springs, a hand organ was wheezing and a monkey chattering in the long room given over to billiards and liquor.

"Dago show in thar," said Nomad, and pushed on into the billiard and liquor room, followed by the baron and Little Cayuse.

The scout and Pawnee tarried to affix their names to the hotel register.

When they went into the other room, the hand-organ man and his monkey had vanished.

"This hyar dago is a nigger," said Nomad, "and he's gone back inter ther leetle room behind ter sop up a drink and feed his monkey."

Before Buffalo Bill could think twice on the curious fact that a negro was playing the dago trick of hand-organ-and-monkey for money, instead of working for it, a man sidled up to him—a small, dusty-haired man, with a wandering right eye that now and then turned back on itself and tried to bore a hole through the ceiling.

"This is Cody, and I am Professor Archibald Stepson Jones," he said, in a high whisper which could be heard over the room much more distinctly than if he had used an ordinary tone. "For two days I have been waiting here to beg permission to go with you into the Pawnee country."

He clutched the scout's right hand, eagerly and bored him with his game eye, instead of the ceiling, as he straightened from his obsequious bow.

Covering the little man with a comprehensive glance, the scout shook off the clinging grip.

"You ought to know," he said, "that right now is a most dangerous time to choose for entering the Pawnee country."

"That is just why I am asking to go with you," said Jones; "to be under the protection of fighting and fearless

men like you would not be perilous even for a bookworm like myself."

"I don't think we could accept any addition to our party. You see, we make it a point to take only experienced men."

"We allow, too," said Nomad, "thet thar is goin' ter be a lot o' Injun fireworks. Ef you've been in this hyar town long you've noticed thet more'n half the houses aire deserted; the people gittin' out because o' ther Injun war talk."

The habitués of the place were collecting round the scout and the little man, for the latter's high whisper had caught attention.

"Old Wanderoo is shore makin' ready fer hatchet an' gun play."

Buffalo Bill looked at the speaker, a heavily armed borderman.

"I'm Long John McCracken," he explained to the scout, "and I've jest got in from the buffalo ranges. The talk round hyar ain't been any too hot for the facts. You know old Wanderoo, the Pawnee Prophet?"

"I have seen him," said the scout.

"We expect," remarked Pawnee, "to know a heap about him before we get through with this. What did you learn, special?"

"He's got a queer fountain out there, y' know, which spouts jest water, ordinary; but when it's time fer the Pawnees to go on the warpath that fountain spouts fire. Take it or not, but it's shore what all the Indians believe and will tell you. That fountain turned to fire last week, and the Pawnees aire dancin' an' ready to move on the whites."

"Not only that; old Wanderoo has got a witch stone; it's as big as a house, and whenever a Pawnee gits any rankiboo idea into his head that he ain't goin' to do what Wanderoo says, he is slung up against that stone, and he sticks thar jest like a fly caught in sticky fly paper until he dies; then he draps off."

His tone was serious, even when some of his hearers began to laugh.

"That's why I want to go into the Pawnee country with you, Cody," the little man piped up; "I have heard of those marvels, and I want to investigate them. I judge that this Pawnee prophet has got hold of some secrets of nature that are worth looking into. I hope you're going to say that I may go along."

"Wanderoo is an old faker," said the scout; "and the secrets of nature that he has got hold of are simply cunning tricks born in his own brain."

"Just the same, Cody——"

A shot sounded at the back of the room, cutting short the sentence.

With a cry, the little man threw up his hands, spun round, then slid down at the scout's feet; blood flowed down over his face as he straightened out with a quiver.

Without stopping beside the fallen man, Buffalo Bill drew a revolver and jumped for the spot where a cloud of smoke floated.

Nearly all the occupants of the room were in a panic; with men throwing themselves under the billiard tables and out through the windows, to escape the lead they expected to see flying in another minute.

Pawnee Bill tarried and stooped over Professor Jones; but Nomad and the baron plunged along at the heels of Buffalo Bill.

Entering the little room at the back, from which the shot had been sent, the scout caught sight of the negro scampering along the hall in pursuit of his monkey.

Cornering the monkey, the negro caught something out of his hands and held it up. It was a revolver. Frightened by the pursuit and the sudden clamor, the monkey crouched in the corner, chattering.

The scout looked at the negro, the monkey, and at the revolver the negro was displaying.

"A man was shot down in there just now," he said sternly. "Do you know anything about it?"

"Fuh de lan' sake! Well, dis yeah monkey done it, if 'twas done."

The scout's revolver covered the negro.

"That sounds fishy," he said, "so I'll ask you to walk back into the billiard room and make your explanation there, where the other men can hear you."

"Dat's sho' de troof, boss," the negro protested. "De monkey done it, if 'twas done. He was foolin' wid my revolveh——"

"March into the billiard room and tell your story there."

Catching up his monkey, the negro walked ahead of the scout into the other room. Some of the scared men were coming back. The proprietor had rushed in from the hotel office. Professor Jones was still on the floor, with Pawnee Bill working over him.

"The tinhorn that did this," cried Pawnee, starting up when he saw Buffalo Bill, "made a mighty good try for the professor's life candle, but he didn't quite snuff it out. He's coming round now, I think."

The scout drove the negro up to the fallen man.

"Friends," he said, addressing the excited men he saw before him, "we've got a queer case here. It looks to be an attempt at murder, but you can decide that point. You saw me talking with the man there who called himself Professor Jones. I never saw him before. A shot sounded in the back room, and it got the professor."

"An' mebbysso et war aimed at you, Buffler!" grated old Nomad, staring angrily round.

"When I rushed back there, I found this negro chasing his monkey; he appeared to snatch something out of the monkey's paws, and held up the revolver he is carrying. Now, for the rest of it, I'm going to let him tell it."

The negro, backed against the wall, with the monkey chattering excitedly on his shoulder, seemed a much-scared man.

"Hit don't look lak it can be de troof," he said, "yit it sho' mus' be. Now, I'm gwine tuh tell you-alls, gemman, jes' what I know. You seen me in here wid my awgan an' mah monkey. I was playin' fo' you-all, an' de monkey was dancin' an' collectin' de money what you gemmans was kind enough tuh contribute fuh mah pehfawmence."

"W'en it looked as ef you-alls didn't keer fuh no mo', I done tuck mah awgan an' monkey an' went in de yuther room; fuh I knows dat white gemman don' like to stan' up by er bar an' drink wif a cullud man like what I is."

"Back dar I was lookin' at my revolveh, jes' de same's any of you-alls might be doin' wif yo' own, when de monkey done tuck it out o' my han'. I tried to git hit away f'um him, an' in de scramble hit went off. Ef it was p'inted at dis yeah gemman an' de bullet git him, nobody is mo' sorry dan I is. An' dat is de troof."

Buffalo Bill listened attentively to this singular recital. There was something in it, and in the negro himself, that the great scout did not like.

Thinking the scout would be against him, the negro now threw himself upon the mercy of the crowd.

"I'se willin' to have you-alls investigate in any way. I know I ain't got no witnesses, fuh de monkey he cain't talk; but ef he could, he'd say de same as I has. I couldn't have had no grudgment ag'inst dis man, fuh I neveh set mah eyes on him befo'."

Taking the revolver, Nomad spun the cylinder round and peeked down the muzzle, as if he fancied that might help elucidate the mystery.

"Muzzle has got powder stains," he announced gravely, "an' thar is one chamber empty; so I reckon we can hold this hyar revolver guilty, anyhow."

The Pagoda Springs marshal entering, Buffalo Bill turned his prisoner over to him and aided Pawnee in restoring Professor Archibald Stepson Jones to his senses.

The wound was on top of the professor's head; an inch lower, and the bullet would have bored through his brain. A stunning, knock-down blow had been delivered, and the skin of the scalp was slit open; but the scout declared that the professor would come round soon and be as lively as ever.

Even as this pronouncement was made, the little man opened his eyes, and, taking up his appeal at the point where the bullet had cut it short, he began to beg to accompany the scout on his coming journey into the Pawnee country.

The shooting, and the manner of it, created much excitement and talk. But public opinion being with the negro, the next morning, after a brief examination before the local court, he was released.

Buffalo Bill tipped him a warning, though, as he came out of the courtroom:

"Better get out of the town!"

The negro departed in haste with his hand organ and monkey.

Always curious, Nomad followed his trail a short distance out of the town, in company with Little Cayuse.

"Et's a quar thing, Buffler," he reported, on coming back. "Instead o' hittin' the high places in the direction of whar white people aire livin', thet nigger dago has cut out fer the Pawnee ranges an' the hide-outs of old Wanderoo."

CHAPTER II.

THE ATTACK ON THE STAGE.

Professor Archibald Stepson Jones was apparently a man not easily dismayed; for, in spite of his wound and Buffalo Bill's refusal, he still was determined to enter the dangerous Pawnee country.

He made this clear as sunlight the next morning, when Natty Downs, the stage driver, swung his four horses and vehicle round in front of the Pagoda Springs hostelry.

"This hyar," Natty announced, coming up the hotel steps and switching his boots, "is the final last trip which this ole hearse is goin' to make to Cimarron Crossin', until the weather changes an' the sky don't look so blame bloody. I ain't got no hankerin' to have my scalp lifted by Pawnees."

The trail to Cimarron Crossing cut across Pawnee ground.

"All what aire goin' with me git ready; we starts in ten minutes. If nobody goes I ain't goin' to quarrel; I'll jest tuck the horses back in the stable. That'd suit me, I reckon."

Professor Archibald Stepson Jones came bounding down the steps, a bandage wound round his head.

"Driver, I'm going," he announced.

Natty Downs stared.

"Any others want to go with this gent in the hearse?" he demanded.

"Don't call it that," Jones protested. "It gives me the shivers."

No others wanted to go; some of them had business which called them to make the trip, but they, preferring safety, were willing to let business slide.

"You kin see," said Natty, in an argumentative tone, "that nobody else is insistin' I shall stick my head into danger; then why not stay hyar yerself? Of course, havin' said I'd go, I've got to—if you insist."

"I insist!" said the little professor. "Toss up my satchel, will you; and be careful of it."

"Hefts like it was full of pistols, er other hardware," said Natty, as he threw it into the boot.

"Geologist's hammers, and the like," said the professor. He climbed in; then changed his mind and mounted to the top with Natty.

"Anybody else wantin' to risk his scalp by goin' with me to-day?" Natty demanded. "I got to go through, now that this gent demands it; which makes me feel like I'd be glad to have a leetle more comp'ny."

He snapped his whip and drove away when no one else came forward.

Professor Archibald Stepson Jones, cuddling beside the strapping driver, began to ask questions:

"You've heard this talk about old Wanderoo? How close, now, do you go to his village?"

"Give me my way, and I wouldn't go within five hundred miles of it," said Natty. "But when we're about the middle of this trip we has to swing in within twenty miles—too clost for comfort."

"You've never been in that village?"

"Never. When I go there I'm a prisoner, you hear me!"

"But Cody and his crowd are going in."

"That's different. It's their bizness, and they're expected to."

The little man reflected in silence as the stage bounced on.

"I'm paying twenty-five dollars for this passage," he said.

"An' it's worth a hundred. If I hadn't said I'd go, money couldn't hire me."

"That sounds disheartening—to me; for, you see, I was going to offer you a hundred if you would go within five miles of the village and set me down there."

Natty Downs twisted round and stared at the little man, and the professor bored back with his flicking right eye.

"Say, you're bughouse, I reckon!" Natty growled.

"Not a bit."

"What you want to do that fer, then?"

"I want to learn old Wanderoo's secrets. I'm satisfied he has made marvelous discoveries in the realms of nature, and—"

"Cut it out, and forgit it; fer what good will it do you if you discover a bookful of wonders, and in the end old Wanderoo dries your scalp in his lodge fire?"

"Will you do it for a hundred dollars?"

"Hanged if I will; not for five hundred! If these hosses should run away and drag me there, I would; not otherwise."

He swung in on the reins and the stage came to a swaying stop.

"Did you see that?" he said.

"What?"

"There it is ag'in; a man on horseback—or is it an Injun?"

The professor stood up, shaded his eyes with his hand, and looked.

"It's a white man, on horseback," said Natty, relieved; "or else an Injun w'arin' white man's clo'es. That might be, y' know; let a Pawnee buck put a bullet into a white man, and he'd strip him and put the things on himself. Them Pawnees aire all thieves."

"You aren't going back?" said the perturbed professor.

"Waal, not if you're game to go on. I wouldn't want you remarking round the hotel as how you was gamer than me. We'll go on, if you say so."

"Go on, then; and I'll give you a thousand dollars if you'll put me within five miles of the Pawnee village."

Natty had been about to urge his horses on, but he didn't.

"Say," he said, "if you ain't crazy, you've got some big card up your sleeve. What is it?"

"Do you accept my offer?"

"Well, I'll think about it as we drive on. Y' see, I've got a wife and kid, an' to a man like that a thousand dollars looks bigger'n a haystack. I'd advise ye not to let any tin horns round Pagoda Springs know you've got wealth like that; next time it would be worse than jest a bullet wound on top of the head."

"Tell me what you have heard about Wanderoo, while we're driving on and you're turning that round in your mind," the professor urged. "Is he really as dangerous an Indian as he is said to be?"

"Dangerous!" He looked round at the little man, and the little man bored him in return. "Dangerous!"

"That's what I said—is he dangerous; as dangerous as he is credited with being?"

"Looky here, stranger; you've paid me passage money, and accordin' to all the Western rules of the road that binds me to stand by you, which includes good advice. You keep away from old Wanderoo! Did you ever hear of the Bolton massacre, twenty-odd years ago? He was old Wanderoo then, and he was backin' that. That hot country which you've heard is paved with good intentions ain't—it's paved with devils like old Wanderoo."

He flickered his whiplash and turned his eyes on the hill where he had seen the horseman disappear.

"I got to keep watch there," he explained; "for if that was one Injun, a hundred may be nestlin' there, like rattlesnakes, ready to strike."

Nearing the spot, he put the bud to his horses and sent the stage rocking along.

"He went down the other side," he said, "so I guess I was more scared than hurt, and nobody wa'n't laying for us."

The crang of a rifle sounded, a bullet cut the lines in front of his hands, and the horses swung round, frightened instantly.

"They're there," he yelled, "jest as I feared! Now, stranger—"

The single report was followed by a fusillade, which struck down the driver and sent Professor Archibald Jones to cover as the stage bounded and spun round.

The professor was game. Dropping flat on his face, he sprang to shoot back with a pair of revolvers he drew out with marvelous quickness.

A rain of cold lead swept over and about the coach, smashing through it, too, and wounding one of the horses. Then the scared runaways took the stagecoach out of the zone of fire, and, swinging into the back track, they raced over the Pagoda Springs Trail.

The professor looked at Natty Downs, stretched out on top of the stage.

"Dead!" he said. "He won't get my money for taking me to the Pawnee village. Well, I'll go there myself—if I can."

The trouble with the plan was that he could not carry it out; the runaway horses, one of them stung by a wound, were now unmanageable. If the professor could have got hold of the cut lines, even then he could not have stopped them.

So he had to give it up and content himself with clinging to whatever he could find to lay hold of. He expected the stage to go to pieces, it lurched so wildly; but it held together, and the steaming horses brought it into Pagoda Springs.

"We were attacked by Indians," the professor reported, "five miles out, and the driver was killed."

He had two bullet holes through his hat, and as many through his coat. The panels of the coach were smashed and riddled.

CHAPTER III.

THE CACHED EMERALDS.

The preparations Buffalo Bill and his pards made were few. They saw to their weapons, made sure they had a plentiful supply of ammunition, filled their war bags with food and their bottles with water, and were ready for the trail.

While Cayuse and Nomad were looking after the animals and strapping the packs, Buffalo Bill and Pawnee interviewed the little professor.

"I showed the white feather only because the horses ran away," he said, strutting proudly and displaying the

bullet holes in his hat and coat. "Still, if they hadn't, I suppose I'd now be stretched out alongside that unfortunate driver."

Natty Downs' body had been carried into a storeroom across the way. Men were filing solemnly past it.

Coming up in front of the storeroom, Nomad began to take up a collection for the benefit of the dead man's family.

"He's left a wife an' kiddy," said Nomad, passing along with his hat outstretched; "they're over to the next town, whar he sent 'em a week ago to git 'em out of the way o' Injun troubles. How many men round hyar feels symp'thy fer them twenty dollars' wuth? Symp'thy thet ain't like ther good Samaritan, ready ter bind up wounds and pour in ile ain't wuth shucks in this hyar world er any other. How many's got twenty dollars' wuth o' symp'thy fer that widder and kiddy? Don't all tork at wonst."

Nomad had dropped in two twenty-dollar gold pieces. "My symp'thy ekals two screamin' double eagles," he announced. "Who goes me better? Don't all tork at wonst."

Buffalo Bill and Pawnee went him better; they gave fifty dollars apiece. The baron coughed up as much; and Little Cayuse contributed a month's government pay—thirteen dollars.

Western bordermen are generous; and the golden coins began to rattle into Nomad's old beaverskin.

Professor Archibald Stepson Jones hesitated; then he fished out ten dollars and threw it into the contribution.

"This hyar is bindin' up wounds and pourin' in ile," shouted Nomad, passing on. "Who's got another twenty-dollar gold piece thet is burnin' holes in his pocket?"

"I couldn't say how many Indians there were," confessed the professor, answering the scout's inquiry. "I didn't see but one man, and it was a question with the driver whether he was a white man or an Indian. He was on horseback and dropped out of sight behind the ridge back of where the shooting began."

"A renegade, if a white man," commented the scout. "We're likely to meet with such cattle. You didn't hear trampling of ponies before or after the shooting?"

"A hundred ponies might have been pounding the grass there after the shooting began, and I wouldn't have known it," the professor admitted; "the stage and the runaway horses made too much noise. And I confess I wasn't listening for sounds of that kind; I was trying to keep out of the way of the bullets and get hold of the dragging lines."

"You're lucky to have got off with your life," the scout declared when the questioning ended.

Professor Jones flickered his wild eye round and shot him a sharp look; at the same time a dry smile crackled across his face like a wrinkling of withered parchment.

"Compliments without deeds worth while are poor stuff, Cody," he said. "I don't think I showed the white feather. But perhaps that wasn't meant as a compliment? The practical thing is, I want you to take me with you when you go in chase of those Indians."

"The marshal is summoning a posse," said the scout, "and you can join that. We shall go with the marshal's crowd—a while."

"Then shift for yourselves?"

"I think it will come to that."

"You'll push on to old Wanderoo's village; and the others, after brushing round the outskirts of the Pawnee country, will return to the security of the town. I want to go with you—I've told you why; as a scientist, those mysteries old Wanderoo is working appeal to me irresistibly."

The scout flashed him a queer look.

"Is that the only reason?"

For a moment only, Professor Archibald Stepson Jones was confused.

"Yes, that's the only reason," he said.

Yet a minute later he was ready to make a confession.

"You're a shrewd man, Cody," he declared, while his good eye twinkled and the other rolled round and stabbed at the ceiling; "the love of scientific inquiry is powerful, but in a real show-down the love of money gets the goods."

From his hip pocket he drew a wallet and extracted a soiled bit of paper. Flirting this open, he extended it to the scout.

"By glancing your eagle optic over that," he chirruped, "you'll see where the milk lies in the coconut."

The scout read:

"DEAR FRIEND: The emeralds, worth a hundred thousand dollars, I cached near the boiling spring, on Trout Creek, in the Pawnee country. I have a feeling that I'll never be able to go back and get them; it is in a dangerous country, and I am a sick man. So I pass this information over to you as my best friend, and I hope it will prove valuable.
BERNARD BROWN."

"Brown is dead?" said the scout, looking again at the professor.

"He passed in his checks in a hospital in New York; that was five years ago."

"This is your first try for these emeralds?"

"It's the first time I've had a chance, Cody; I've been a busy man. Scientific inquiry——"

"Scientific fudge!" cut in the scout. "Don't you think you had better drop that?"

The game eye flickered round and the man's mouth fell open.

"Why——"

"I saw at once that you were playing a game of some kind; that you were not a scientific man and that——"

"I didn't play it well enough?" The little man laughed and shrugged his thin shoulders. "Is that it?"

"I hope you're not a tinhorn; and I hope that this paper came into your hands legitimately. Pardon my plain speech."

He passed the paper back.

"And I can go with you?"

"No, you can't; go with the marshal's crowd. We can take only experienced men."

"What do you say if I turn over to you a fifth of those emeralds, in case we find them? That would be twenty thousand for you—and you needn't divvy with the rest of your party if you didn't want to."

Nomad came back, shaking his beaverskin, which was half full of gold pieces.

"Who's got er leetle more symp'thy fer er widdy and er orphondt kiddy?" he was demanding. "Don't all tork at wonst."

"I couldn't do it," said the scout to the professor, and turned away.

"I'll hand over a fourth of those emeralds, if we locate them," said the little man, following him.

"I couldn't take you along; for, you see, that would weaken our party, and we've got serious work ahead of us is my guess. When this trouble is over you can look for that cache."

The little man caught him by the sleeve, detaining him.

"See here, Cody," he begged, "help me in this matter and I'll give you a half. That's liberal. What do you say?"

"That I'll think about it after this Pawnee trouble is over."

Cayuse was bringing up the horses and the baron's mule. Five minutes later, the scout's party rode forth from Pagoda Springs, leading the way for the marshal's posse.

With the latter they saw, as they passed out of the town, was Professor Archibald Stepson Jones, treasure hunter and self-confessed fraud.

CHAPTER IV.

A SUGGESTIVE DISCOVERY.

A peculiar discovery was made when they reached the point of the attack on the stagecoach.

Instead of the tracks of a number of Indian ponies, only one track was found, leading away from the place—the track of a shod horse.

Throwing a leg over the saddle, Nomad slid to the ground when this was seen. Near where he alighted were a number of empty cartridge cases and some empty cartridge boxes.

"Whoosh!" he breathed. "This looks plum' cur'us."

The marshal's posse spurred up, and the scout turned to the little professor, as he continued to call him for an explanation if he could give it.

"Only one horseman was seen," said Jones; "I told you that. But there was so much shooting I sure thought that a hundred Indians were belting away at me."

"The shooting was bunched—you said that," the scout reminded.

"A dozen rifles were going at once, I thought."

"Yet only one man was here."

"You saw how the stage was shot up," said Jones, "and you know that the driver was killed and one of the horses wounded. And I got four bullets through my hat and coat."

"Thirty-eight calibers," announced Nomad, exhibiting some of the brass cases.

In a region where the revolvers were usually Colt forty-fives and the rifles of similar caliber, it seemed a significant thing. All the empty cartridge cases were of the same caliber.

"This critter war usin' a Gatlin' gun," said the trapper; "otherwise thar ain't no accountin' fer et. So I take et thet instead of an Injun attack this war jest a reg'lar road-agent holdup."

The little man's game eye flickered round, scanning the ground and the single trail of a horse.

"While you go on an' see what et means, ef ye kin," said Nomad, speaking to the scout, "me an' Cayuse will back-track this critter. Ain't nobody been in Pagoda Springs with a gun that c'd sling a dozen bullets ter wonst, an' I know et. This riles my cur'osity an' I has got ter look inter et."

Calling to Cayuse, he remounted, and they took the backward trail.

Buffalo Bill's party and the marshal's posse of Pagoda Springs citizens picked up the forward trail, with the expectation of soon running the solitary horseman to earth; thinking to find, when they did so, that they were trailing a road agent.

Before they had gone five miles, Nomad and Cayuse rejoined them, having made a swift ride.

"Et's a quar thing," Nomad reported. "When me an' Cayuse, each takin' a side of the reg'lar trail, had gone back a mile, we found whar thet hoss track had entered et. A hundred yards er so beyond thet, we found whar ther hoss had been tied, in a leetle grove; you seen thet grove as you come erlong out of ther town."

"Ther mos' cur'est part o' this cur'ous thing is thet ther rider had walked frum ther trail out to thet grove, and that he had mounted ther hoss thar. So I cal'late he had come from Pagoda Springs, after all."

Archibald Stepson Jones heard this narration with interest, and flickered his wandering eye round at Nomad.

"You didn't happen, though," he said, "to see any signs by which you could guess who he was?"

"No, we didn't; but he war a white man; ther tracks o' his boots showed thet."

"A road agent," said the marshal. "The trouble is, though," he remarked to the scout, with an uneasy air, "he is heading now straight into the Pawnee country."

"Just where you wanted to go, professor," said the scout, in an aside to Jones. "I suppose that doesn't strike you as anything queer?"

"We're right now," added the marshal, "in the X Y Ranch's cattle range; it lays up ag'inst the aidge of the Pawnee country. Last week old man Davis, what owns it, was gittin' out his cattle, some of 'em, to keep the Pawnees from rustlin' 'em; but I see over there that he has still got a right smart lot left in here."

The country was level, with short-grass plains running away to the horizon, except for a few miles each side of Trout Creek and its tributaries. They were on the North Fork, and the grass was half as high, in places, as a man's head.

In this high grass the cattle were feeding as peaceably as if no danger threatened them. There were a hundred in the first bunch encountered. Then they came in larger and still larger bunches.

By following down this tributary, they would come, after a while, to Trout Creek; and along Trout Creek old Wanderoo and his dancing warriors were encamped.

The marshal and his followers began to show signs of

nervousness after the scout had pointed his party in that direction.

"So long as Wanderoo ain't out here lookin' for us," said the marshal finally, "I don't know that we've any right to go piroutin' through his land; it's bound to stir up trouble. Besides, in spite of wild reports, things seem right peaceable. Otherwise these cattle would have been attacked or stampeded."

Professor Jones came to the scout while the marshal and his men were discussing among themselves the question of returning to Pagoda Springs.

"Those cowards won't go any farther," he said; "so what do you say to that offer of half the emeralds to let me go on with you? You fellows have got the right kind of stuff in you, and I want to stick with you; I'll run all the risk. If what that letter says is so, half them emeralds are worth fifty thousand. What d'ye say?"

"Jones," said the scout, "remember that I don't know you. Still, if conditions were ordinary, I probably shouldn't object if you went along and minded your own affairs. Right now it is different; you can see that. Besides," he added, "you admit that you didn't give me your right name; and only when you thought it might pay you did you admit why you are so crazy to go with me. Don't you think yourself that ought to bar you out?"

"Fifty thousand dollars talks," said Jones, rolling his game eye round.

"It doesn't talk loud enough for me to hear it when I've got important work to do. You see, we are in the employ of the government, and we have been sent here to look into this threatened Indian trouble and stop it if we can. While we're at that we can't think of anything else."

Jones flushed.

"Then you refuse?" he said angrily.

"You're guessing it, Jones," returned the scout.

"We're going back, Cody," announced the marshal, riding up now. "We can't help you any by going on, and a lot of men ramming through Pawnee ground will do more harm than good; that's the way we look at it. You fellows will go on, of course; and we're wishing you all kinds of success. We'll get ready back in Pagoda Springs; and if the Pawnees attack the place we'll try to give a good account of ourselves."

When the marshal's men had gone a mile on their homeward way, a horseman was seen to detach himself and linger.

The scout put his field glasses on this man.

"Professor Archibald Stepson Jones has decided to tarry," he announced. "I thought so."

He had already explained to his friends about the letter which the little man carried, and his offer of a share of the cached emeralds.

"Just what is that tinhorn up to, necarnis?" Pawnee Bill asked. "Is there really an emerald cache near that boiling spring, do you suppose?"

"I've had some curious suggestions playing tag with each other," the scout answered. "You recollect the negro with the monkey, and how this fellow got the bullet from the room at the rear of the billiard hall. I begin to think there is something in that emerald-cache story, and that two men are trying to reach it, each striving to get there first. One is Professor Archibald Stepson Jones, and the other is the negro."

"Waugh!" interrupted the borderman. "Then ther dago nigger shot him."

"I think so; I think he tried hard to wipe out Professor Jones right there. I think also that he came out along the trail, and, seeing that Jones was on top of the stage with the driver, he did that shooting, trying in that way to get him. If so," the scout added, "the trail we are following is the negro's trail, and he is ahead of us."

"Pikin' straight fer old Wanderoo's stampin' grounds, too," said Nomad. "Say, ef thet is so, thar's goin' ter be er nigger scalp dryin' in Wanderoo's lodge fire soon; and I ain't never yit seen one."

"There is likely to be a white man's also," remarked Pawnee, nodding toward the distant horseman. "Old Wandering Eye has hung back, and intends to follow us, since Bill wouldn't let him join us."

When they went on there was no doubt that the wily treasure hunter was following them.

CHAPTER V.

STAMPEDING CATTLE.

"Loo-loo-loo-loo—wuh-loo—wuh-loo!"

High and wild, yet with a musical lilt, rose the cry. The hundreds of cattle in the high grass threw up their heads and began to move uneasily.

"Loo-loo-loo—hi-ee—hi-ee—wye-ee-ee!"

It came from another direction.

"Pawnees!" said the scout, drawing Bear Paw in.

"Trying to stampede the cattle," Pawnee Bill added. "They're down in the grass, so we can't see them. I wonder if they have seen us?"

The wild yells were followed by the rapid explosions of firearms, by a sudden clamor of Indian drums, and by more yelling. Then out of the grass a score of Indians appeared; they came up mounted, showing that their ponies had been lying down.

Rushing upon the cattle, yelling, firing rifles and revolvers, beating drums, and waving blankets, they started the stampede before Buffalo Bill's party could get near enough to interfere.

"They don't see us yet, I think," said the scout. "The cattle have bunched and are heading out toward the open plains. We are on a ridge here, which they are going to take. If we slide off to the right, and some of us off to the left, we can get on each side of them and start them straight along. The Indians will be behind them."

Nomad stared.

"Playin' with death, thet is!" he declared.

"Budt idt iss svidt Schnitzenhauser," said the baron, drawing a revolver and settling his round body firmly in the saddle. "I haf peen vandting a liddle bidt oof oxide-mendt."

"You'll get et ef Buffler puts thet crazy notion inter effect," the borderman warned.

"Your idea is, necarnis," said Pawnee, "to shunt the cattle along and send them out toward Pagoda Springs, in the hope that when they are started right and going in a mad stampede the Indians can't stop them nor turn them, and will lose them."

"Exactly. Here are several thousand head of cattle; they're worth a lot of money. It's our plain duty to protect the property, as well as the lives, of white men. Get that stampede well under way, and nothing can turn the cattle from the course they have taken. The Indians will try to whirl them round in the direction of their village; no doubt old Wanderoo's bunch of ki-yis begin to feel the need of meat rations. But if we can point them toward Pagoda Springs, the Indians will not follow far in that direction for fear of the white men."

Pawnee Bill drew Chick-Chick round.

"I'm with you, Pard Bill. If we can run off old Wanderoo's meat rations right when his warriors think they have got it corraled, it will be a great play."

"If our horses weren't of the best, it would be a game too risky to try," the scout admitted; "but I'm believing that the Pawnees haven't got a cayuse in all their pony herds that can stand up with the animals under us."

"That's right, necarnis," Pawnee leaned over and stroked the sleek neck of his horse. "I'd pit Chick-Chick against anything on four legs, and you think the same about Bear Paw. The Piute's pony, Navi, is the best ever; and old Hide Rack and the baron's mule are some at going when they're called on. I think we can ring the bell."

"I reckon I'm gittin' old an' cautious," Nomad grunted. "I has seen the time when a call like thet would appeal ter me powerful; I was ez hongry fer danger es ther baron says he is; but now, bein' a bit oldish, I allus has ter look fer ther possibilities. Ef ever'thing floats erlong right, we'll make et. But say thet an Injun gits clost ernough ter slam a bullet inter one er more of our animiles? Or say thet a hoss steps his foot inter a badger er kyote hole an' breaks a laig? Yer has got ter figger on things o' thet kind happenin'."

"Nomadt he iss gittin' skeered," said the baron, twirling the cylinder of his revolver to see that it was in working order. "He is begin to see his vhisikizoosics."

"Go on with ye, baron! I war fightin' ki-yis out hyar when you was still eatin' sauerkraut in Germany. An' I know danger when I sees et."

Nomad and Buffalo Bill went off on the right side of

the ridge, and the other members of the party slid down on the other side; thus they got the stampeding cattle between them; and when the cattle swung by they crowded in against them and tried to hold them to a straight line of flight.

In spite of the deep grass the maddened animals were going already at good speed when they struck the low ridge, and tearing up a dust cloud that screened the white men from the pursuing Indians. The Pawnee rifles were still going, the yells still lifting, and the drums beating. With the thunder of the hoofs and the bellowings of the cattle the result was a pandemonium of sound.

But suddenly a new element presented itself.

A streak of flame shot up in the lower ground on the side taken by Pawnee Bill and his companions. The Indians were firing the high grass there to turn the animals in the direction they wanted them to go; not because they knew of the presence of the white men, but because this was an infallible means of turning cattle.

It had its dangers, for the Indians as well as for the cattle; but, counting on the fact that beyond the high grass area was only short buffalo grass, which they could gain with the cattle, they thought it was safe.

Nomad "woofed" like a scared bear when he saw that streak of fire, and pulled old Hide Rack in so suddenly that he threw the horse on its haunches.

Buffalo Bill likewise reined in Bear Paw.

"Looky thar!" the borderman yelled, pointing. "Recklect what I said, too! I war thinkin' o' badger holes, and mebbys bullets; but thet is a heap worse."

For a moment or so the scout did not speak; he was considering the possibilities.

"Over on thet side is Pawnee, ther baron, and Little Cayuse; on' ther fire has jumped up over thar clost by 'em. All I kin say is, I hope et don't git 'em. An' hyar comes ther cattle, runnin' away frum et; ye cain't no more stop 'em on this side now than ye c'd stop a locomotive by pitchin' yerself in front of et."

The scout's face had paled.

"We've got to run for it," he admitted reluctantly; "and Pawnee and his crowd will have to shift for themselves. One thing in their favor is that the fire is coming this way, and they may get out toward the north; the land is open there yet."

Nomad groaned.

"Ef they don't—waal, may ther Lord help 'em! We has got ter move our animiles, Buffler."

They swung their horses round and raced away, with the maddened animals racing after them. The fire had turned the cattle, and those that did not exhaust themselves in the race would probably reach the short-grass country, where the Indians could round them up and drive them on to the Pawnee village.

At the tail of the herd came the Indians on swift ponies, feeling safe for that reason. As for those who had been sent to fire the grass, the wind was taking the fire away from them, so that they were in no peril.

For a few minutes, as their horses pounded on, the scout and the borderman exchanged no words. Each was ranging the land ahead with his eyes, looking for rocky ground to which they could mount and so get out of the line of the cattle and the fire.

They were watching, too, for badger holes and coyote burrows, not easily seen in the deep grass.

A horseman broke into view far ahead; he had turned his horse and was running from the stampede and the fire.

"Ole Game Eye, I reckon," Nomad grunted.

"Horse and rider both seem too large," remarked the scout.

"Game Eye is round hyar somewhar, I reckon. But mebbys et is ther dago nigger. We was follerin' his trail, y' reckon, so we figgered, when we belted inter thet stampede."

The horseman disappeared, dropping into a swale.

Buffalo Bill began to urge Bear Paw, seeing that the cattle and the fire were gaining on them.

"Ther Pawnees have done too good er job," said Nomad; "looks et, anyway. Thet fire is comin' too fast. They ort ter picked a time when the wind warn't so high, an' they could er worked et better. Bergins ter look like them cattle is goin' ter be barbecued right hyar, an' will never git on ter old Wanderoo's Injun town. Makes me feel

sorry fer ther cattle; but et would sarve them thievin' Pawnees right."

For a while they raced on, driving Bear Paw and Hide Rack to the limit of their speed.

They had turned toward some rock ridges, which they hoped now to reach. The grass was short on the ridges, and that would lessen the fire, if it ran over them at all.

"I cain't help worritin' 'bout Pawnee an' t'others," the borderman admitted. "Y' see, they must er been clost ter thet fire when et started. Still, Pawnee is some fer workin' out of a bad scrape; and ther baron an' Little Cayuse ain't slow erlong thet line. Still they——"

He clamped his lips together and drove the spurs into the flanks of Hide Rack.

Another mile, then another, was cast behind under the spurning hoofs. The ridges were close at hand, but the fire had gained. The cattle had shunted to the south, and it began to seem that the strongest would get away from the fire. A number of the weaker and younger had already gone down, trampled to death, doubtless, before the fire reached them, by the stronger animals.

"Ye ain't seein' no more o' thet feller we riz a while ergo?" said Nomad.

"I haven't seen him since he disappeared in that low ground."

"Waal, ther fire is goin' ter swing thet way; grass is powerful heavy thar, too. I dunno who he was er anything, but I'm hopin' thet ther fire don't git him."

They struck the base of the hills and sent their horses up at the jump. The fire, reaching the base, swung in an ocean of flame round the hills toward the south. Ahead of it, still mad with terror, and running like the wind, went the cattle. Now and then one dropped, disappearing like a chip sucked down in a whirling current.

The short grass of the ridges began to burn, and a wing of the fire came mounting toward the top.

Buffalo Bill, having gained a rocky spot, threw a leg over the saddle and dropped to the ground. He had hardly struck when he had out his match box and was snatching handfuls of the short grass. To these he struck lighted matches and threw them round him.

Nomad dropped down and began a similar work.

The short grass caught, smoked, then shot into flame. It flashed like gunpowder round them, and, scorching the legs of the horses, scared them, and would have sent them on again; but the scout and Nomad, swinging back into the saddles, held them there in the zone of fire.

It seemed a cruel thing, for the fire scorched the hair off the legs of the horses round the hoofs and made the animals dance with pain. But it was the only thing to do. In a few minutes a blackened space showed. Leaping on, the fire went rolling across the hills; not a blazing torrent of flame, like that raving in the deep grass below, but enough to look scary.

The blackened and burned space, in which the horses at length stood, formed a fire guard, protecting them from the fire that mounted up the ridges.

Nomad and the borderman were down on the ground now, with strips torn from their blankets, wetting the strips with water from their bottles and binding them round the scorched legs of the horses when they became aware that not all of the cattle had gone on south.

There was a northerly wing of the herd, which had been split off from the main body. This herd, swinging in, and finding fire to the south, had charged the hill in mad fury, and came now rolling up in like a rising tide.

The scout and the borderman sprang up and stared at these cattle in dismay.

"Waugh!" Nomad bellowed. "They're goin' ter run right over us!"

He whipped out a revolver.

To be in front of a herd of scared cattle was as dangerous a place as a man could find to be in; the cattle would knock him down, and their sharp hoofs would pound the life out of him.

This was the peril now threatening the scout and Nomad; and they drew their revolvers, with the intention of dropping as many of the cattle as they could. If they could pile up a heap of dead cattle right in front of them, it would erect a barricade there, round which the others would pass, and in its lee they could find safety for themselves and their horses.

More than once that was a thing which they had done when charged by a maddened herd of buffaloes.

But before they had fired a shot a fusillade opened like an explosion on the heights of the ridge above them, and a storm of bullets plunged into the advancing herd.

Nomad pulled Hide Rack down as the lead screamed over his head.

"Down, Buffler!" he warned.

Bear Paw came down.

The scout and the borderman, crouching together, turned their eyes on the ridge, where a smoke cloud lifted and fire spat out of it; but they saw no one.

The bellowing cattle were tumbling on the slope and heaping up their dead bodies. Soon there was a mound of them; and the rest of the herd, split in two, streamed past the scout and Nomad and their trembling horses.

As soon as the herd had been split the fusillade from the hilltop stopped.

"Whoever the men war," said Nomad, "they done us a big sarvice."

"Without intending it or knowing it, I think."

"You reckon they didn't see us when we come up ther ridge?"

"I'm of the opinion, Nomad, that if he had known we were here, that stream of lead, or a part of it, would have been sent at us."

"Waugh! He?"

"He saw that he was in danger up there, and he had to split the herd for his own safety; incidentally he split it for us; that is my guess."

"Waugh!" Nomad gulped again. "Toads an' tarantulars o' Texas! Thet is a quar guess ye're makin', Buffler. I reckon thar must er been a dozen men er more up thar, doin' thet shootin'!"

"You remember the attack on the stage?"

"I ain't likely ter fergit et. Say, I'm beginnin' ter see——"

"One man made that attack on the stage and sent a rain of bullets. We saw a horseman—but couldn't make out who he was. It is my guess that he reached these ridges ahead of us and went on; then turned back, thinking the herd would get him beyond, and that while they were climbing the slope here was the place to stop the cattle or split the herd. So he came back and split the herd for his own benefit."

"You think et war ther dago nigger?"

"That is my guess—now. As soon as we can we'll go up there and look round. If I'm right, as soon as the herd passes he will ride on."

Nomad tried to fit this in with his previous ideas, and found it hard work.

"Gaspin' gallinippers!" he breathed. "Don't seem as ef et could be. Ther dago nigger! Whyever is ther ombray cavortin' round hyer, anyhow?"

"I tried to explain my idea, in part. He and Jones are both out for the same treasure, which they think is cached in Wanderoo's village; we talked that over, you remember. He got caught in the stampede danger, same as the rest of us, and had to work out of it. He struck for this ridge after we lost sight of him, and he here split the herd that came this way. I may be wrong in my guess, but——"

"Yer don't think so?"

"No, I don't think I am."

Nomad stood up, when the cattle had passed, and looked at the top of the ridge; the last of the herd was vanishing there. The fire was chasing them, but they kept ahead of it. Back from their hammering hoofs shot a rain of pebbles and sand that showered over the borderman and drove him down.

"We might make er try of gittin' up thar now," he said anxiously.

"We'll make it on foot, then; the horses have got to rest."

"Yes, they're played out. Et war a good thing these hyar ridges come erlong, er we'd been in a pickle, spite of all we c'd er done. Waugh! Ther dago nigger! An' him out hyar wi' ther perfessor huntin' fer emeralds cached, while this Pawnee bizness is r'arin' up on ets hind laigs. They shore has got their narve with 'em."

He patted the heaving flanks of old Hide Rack and looked at the wet bandages on the horses' legs.

"Too bad, ole hoss, thet we had ter let ther fire range

up yer hoofs; but what war we ter do otherwise? Ef them cattle had co't ye, they'd chopped ye inter hash; an' thet bigger fire, ef you had fell inter et, would er-cooked ther hash plum' done, I'm tellin' ye. So I hope ye ain't goin' ter mind et—much."

Again his mind ran back to Pawnee and those with him; and, shading his eyes with his hands, he tried to look across the smoky distances, where he supposed they were, if alive.

"I'll shore be everlastin'ly mournin' ther time when I struck this trail," he said, "ef anything has happened ter 'em."

When they climbed, on foot, to the top of the hill, which consumed time, they found no one there. But they found the tracks of a horse, and a pile of empty brass cartridge cases.

The forward view was obscured by the smoke and fire that had gone that way. It was a short-grass fire, fed only by buffalo grass, and of a kind not to be feared much, and they believed that the horseman had ridden away ahead of it.

The sounds still to be heard of running cattle showed that the split herd had gone in two directions.

"He's between the two," said the scout, "and is safe, of course."

"Hyar's wishin' we knowed who he was, an' regrettin' we didn't git er look at him."

Nomad ran out the horseman's trail some distance along the ridge.

"I guess ye war right in one thing, anyhow," he declared. "He swung in round behind this ridge. Fust off, he intended, as his tracks shows, ter go ahead; then he back-tracked and come up ter ther top hyar, fer ter stop ther cattle. And I reckon, 'count of the smoke and the like o' thet, with him gluin' his mind ter ther cattle an' ther sub-jec' in hand, he didn't even think o' lookin' fer us."

He looked off at the fire raging over the lower grass-lands. The smoke obscured the sky, and under it the fire burned in heavy flames that were black with smoke streaks.

"More than half ther cattle went under, I reckon," he said; "but mebbysa thar will still be ernough fer Wanderoo's braves fer er fresh-meat dance. Thet war shore a fool break them Pawnees made, settin' ther grass on fire, fer while et turned ther cattle, it burned up ther heft of 'em. But thet is plum' ther Injun way."

Taking Buffalo Bill's field glasses, he studied the land in another direction.

"I'm plum' het up with worry erbout Pawnee an' his crowd," he confessed.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE FIRST FIRE ZONE.

When the fire set by the Pawnees flashed forth, Baron von Schnitzenhauser, over on that side, was nearest it.

"Himmel!" he gasped.

Instead of wheeling Toofer round and racing to get out of danger, the baron sat staring at the fire, which then flamed in but a single place.

"Der sun she iss hot," he said, "but nodt enough to sdart a fire py der grass in. Idt musdt pe der vork oof Inchuns."

Then another tongue of fire leaped up, followed by another and still another.

The baron heard Pawnee Bill shout to him, and he heard the mad bellowing of the scared cattle. Then his eyes caught sight of a head feather. An Indian rose out of the grass, where he had set one of the fires.

"Py yiminy, dhis iss a outrages," said the baron, angered. "Der gattle iss being turned py der odder vay roundt, unt der Inchuns iss doing idt. Aber dare iss only vun——"

He drove Toofer toward the Indian.

At that moment the redskin saw the redoubtable German on his mule, and, nothing loath, he swung to the back of a spotted pony that he jerked out of the long grass, and, setting his lance in position, he came for the baron with a yell that would have stopped a clock.

"Idt iss my hairs you vandt, eh?" cried the baron. "Vale, you gan haf 'em oof you gedt 'em."

Reaching over, he pulled a big revolver out of the saddle holster and took a shot at the charging Pawnee.

Dropping too low, the bullet caught the spotted pony in the head and tumbled it dead. The redskin rider shot

over the head of the falling pony and disappeared like a snake in the grass.

The baron drew Toofer in and sat staring at the spot where the Indian had vanished, big revolver lifted for a shot as soon as he could catch sight of him.

"You ar-re some sneaks," he said, addressing the invisible Pawnee. "Coom oop oudt oof dare unt make some fighdts mit me!"

The Pawnee did not reappear.

"All right! Der fire vot you haf sedt, idt vill giddt you, I pedt me somet'ings. No, I ain't going to rite oop py you unt ledt you sdick dot lance in mein gizzardt."

Toofer began to snort.

The baron, seeing that the cause was the fire, pulled the mule round.

"I am hadting to leaf you," he called to the Indian, "afdher making my akwaintance; but mein mooel he iss nodt like der fire. Sday dare unt purn der scalb lock oof your headt; idt vill be serving you rightt."

Catching sight of Little Cayuse, who was heading Navi toward the open land northward, the baron raced after him.

He saw the Piute draw the pinto in and stare about.

"Vare iss Bawnee?" the baron bellowed at him as soon as near enough.

Little Cayuse jerked his head round, looking at the baron.

"Me no savvy," he exploded. "Pawnee right here; Injun right here; and Pawnee make um chase. Smoke very bad."

"Vale, idt iss," the baron admitted. "Vhich vay iss he gone?"

The Piute pointed.

"Vos he chasing der Inchun, or vos der Inchun chasing him?" the baron queried.

"You hear shoot?"

"Der fire iss making sooch a grackle I tond't gan hear nettings."

With words and excited motions, the Piute explained that he had not been close to Pawnee; he had dropped behind to urge the cattle along. Then he had seen the fires springing up out of the grass. As he looked toward Pawnee, he beheld an Indian roll out of the grass and take a shot at Chick-Chick; he thought it was at Chick-Chick, for the horse flinched as if the lead struck him.

This enraged Pawnee Bill apparently, and he charged at the Indian. The Indian, straddling a pony, fled, with Pawnee in pursuit; and they had, in the smoke, got beyond the Piute's range of vision.

"Me foller," he said, "but me no see Pawnee."

"Vale, dhis iss der vorst," the baron grumbled. "On der odder site Nomadt unt Cody iss being gatched by der gattle vot iss turning in dot tirection; unt now Bawnee he iss running off like dot. He iss go in dhis vay, huh?"

They rode away together in the direction supposed to have been taken by Pawnee Bill.

Trailing Pawnee's horse was out of the question; the cattle had trodden the grass into a bog, and the fire was coming now, so they had to move to get out of danger.

As they rode along, looking round, they beheld a man riding furiously.

"Meppyso idt iss Bawnee—musdt be," said the baron.

But instantly he saw that it was the little man who had called himself Professor Archibald Stepson Jones.

"Idt iss der brofessor," said the baron; "unt der fire idt iss going to gedt him vor sure!"

A wing of fire, flashing northward like an outstretched red arm, had cut off the horseman as he tried to reach the open ground, and had turned him back.

The baron stood up in his stirrups and sent out a bellowing yell to attract the professor's attention, then fired a shot from his big revolver for the same purpose.

Apparently the little man did not hear, or was too scared to give attention.

The fire closed round him near the base of the high ground he had tried to reach, and blotted him from their sight.

"Ach! He iss a goner!" said the baron. "Der fire idt iss gedt him."

"Ai," said the Piute.

"Unt idt vill gedt us oof ve tond't move ower sdumps."

"Ai."

"You yoost foller me. If ve rite fasdt, ve gan sdill gedt uss py der oben ground, vare der grass he iss short."

He drove Toofer into a wild run, and the Piute sent Navi along as fast. But the fire so gained on them that they began to be frightened. The cattle were racing away from them on one side; and the fire, pursuing the cattle, was closing in toward them from the other, while they were riding in this lane between the cattle and the fire, trying to reach the short-grass land.

Navi put his foot into a prairie-dog hole as the short-grass land was gained, and threw the Piute sprawling. He did not rise, and the baron swung heavily to the ground as the pony extricated itself.

"Der Biute he iss kilt, meppyso," the baron grunted; "budt der fire iss nodt going to gedt him, I pedt you."

Seeing that Navi was all right, he hooked the rein to the end of his lariat, slung the Piute to the back of Toofer, and, mounting behind, went on, carrying the Indian and leading the pony.

But already he was safe from the high-grass fire of the lowlands.

The Piute was still unconscious when the baron stopped to back-fire against the lighter fire that was now coming toward them over the short buffalo grass.

While doing this, he hung to the reins of the pony and the mule, with the Piute tied by the lariat to Toofer's back.

"Whoa, you!" the baron yelled, as he scattered burning grass and flaming matches in a circle round him. "Dhis iss no dimes vor a tancing pitzness."

With the short-grass fire flashing under his feet and leaping against his legs, he scrambled to the back of Navi, then held pony and mule as well as he could while the fire leaped and licked round them, and, having burned a black spot, raced away and was thenceforth harmless.

The baron had consumed a good deal of time, but he was now safe from the fire, and the only damage was that the legs of the animals had been burned a little, though not seriously.

Untying the lariat, he lifted the unconscious Piute to the ground.

"Ach!" he groaned, as he stood up and tried to look through the surrounding smoke. "Dhis iss a trouple-someness vor sure. I am vandting oxcidemendt, budt nodt oof dhis kindt. I am vondering apowet Cody unt Nomad unt apowet Pawnee. Dot brofessor, too—der fire iss gatch him, I know idt. He iss gidt no emeralds now."

Unable to see anything, he dropped down, and, with his flask and his water bottle, he began to try to bring the Piute back to consciousness.

"His headt idt iss not proke, unt his necks idt iss sdill soundt; so idt iss only dot he strike on his headt unt haf some goncussion off der prains. Idt iss show vor sure dot an Inchun haf prains somedimes."

The Piute showing signs of returning animation under the baron's manipulation, the latter was continuing the work, with the Piute lying on the ground, when suddenly the Piute sat up.

"Ach! You ar-re vell again, heh?"

"Cayuses!" whispered the Piute.

He had heard hoofbeats, reaching his ear through the ground.

"Cayuses comin'," he said.

"Himmel! Inchuns coming dhis way; iss dot your meanness?"

The Piute nodded and fell back, being still too weak to sit up long.

"Oof so," said the baron, getting out his revolvers and laying them on the blackened ground beside him, "dhey vill soon be getting idt in der necks. I am vandting some oxcidemendt, unt I am gedding idt."

His belief that the coming hoofbeats indicated approaching Pawnees and that danger was imminent so stirred the Piute that he sat up and tried to reach his war bag on the back of the pinto.

The baron unhooked it and gave it to him.

Instead of drawing forth a weapon, the Piute extracted his medicine hoof—the dried hoof of a mustang—and with it began to rub his body.

"Petter you kvit dot foolishmendt unt gidt your weapons ready," the baron warned.

"Heap good medicine hoof," the Piute objected as he scrubbed away.

Having finished with himself, he turned to the baron.

"Make um so no bullet can hurt," he urged.

"Go idt, oof you vandt to; I aind't no subjections, so you don't gidt in my vay vhen der shoodting is pegin."

Having made himself and the baron "bullet proof," the Piute felt better and got out his revolver and knife.

"Pawnee come pronto," he said, and stretched himself flat on his stomach. "You git um pony down, mule down, huh?"

The baron acted on the advice and pulled the trained animals down. As he did it, he noticed that the fall had stiffened the pinto.

The Pawnees, a score in number, rattled into view off to the right. They were driving their cayuses at a vigorous gait and were closely bunched. Fortunately they were looking off in the direction taken by the cattle. And the smoke was thick enough to have an obscuring effect.

"Dhey aind't seen us," whispered the baron. "Dot iss a gootness!"

The Piute caught the baron's arm convulsively, then pointed.

"Got um white man," he said.

The baron brushed the water out of his eyes and stared at the dimly discernible band of Pawnees.

"You are a rightness," he admitted; "he iss a brisoner."

"Him Pawnee Bill," gulped the Piute, half rising in his excitement, as he made this discovery.

"Himmel!"

The baron rose to his knees, wiped the smoke tears out of his eyes again, and once more looked hard at the group of wild riders.

"Donneruntblitzen! Idt iss so! Dhey haf gabtured Bawnee. Ach!"

He would have scrambled to his feet, but the hand of the Piute stayed him.

"Very bad—*muy malo!* No can do! Pawnee git kill."

"Unt ve are going to sday py dhis blace in unt see dot? Nodt vwhile my name iss Schnitzenhauser. Dhey have got our friendt unt are riting away mit him."

He swung up his revolver.

"*Muy malo.*"

"You are sbeak py der troot; ve gand't do nottings. Yumpin' yack rappits! Dhis iss a fixin's."

The Pawnees passed on into the smoke cloud, riding swiftly, with their prisoner in their midst; but not before the watchers, off on the left, saw that Pawnee Bill was tied to Chick-Chick. There could be no mistake; the wide-brimmed Stetson and the familiar clothing made the identification certain.

The baron sprang to his feet as soon as the Pawnees had gone on.

"Ve vill gif der chase," he said, swinging round excitedly and catching up the bridle of his mule.

He began to kick the mule and bid it rise.

"Gidt oop, you!" he bellowed. "Ve haf vork cudt oudt."

The Piute, ignoring his weakness and throbbing head, got the pony on its feet. But he discovered that the pinto was so stiffened as a result of its heavy fall that it could not do fast traveling.

"Heap bad!" he cried again. "No can go pronto."

"Yoost you gedt py der pack oof der bony on, unt ve vill see."

It was no use; Navi was lame.

"Ve musdt findt Puffalo Pill unt Nomadt," said the baron.

So they mounted, and, riding slowly because of the pinto, they went in search of the scout and his trapper pard.

CHAPTER VII.

PAWNEE BILL CAPTURED.

There were a number of things which Pawnee Bill regarded with especial affection.

In that category were his famous Price knives, made by the master knife maker, superior as weapons and throwing purposes to any bowie ever fashioned. They were of the finest steel, tempered true, and were gold-mounted. With a Price knife Pawnee could cut a twig from a tree twenty feet over his head, shooting the knife from his hand straight as an aimed bullet; and could put the point of the knife in the middle of the ace of spades at an even greater distance on a level.

His revolvers, also gold-mounted, were of the finest make, accurately balanced, with hair triggers that could be changed at a touch into the other variety; and with them he had done shooting of a kind to make the oldest gunman of the border open his eyes and stare.

At his saddle, or at his belt, was a rope of horsehair, often two of them, with which he did work that had turned many a Mexican rope expert green with envy.

Then there was his Stetson, wide of brim, light on the head, impervious to rain, defiant of the sun, as perfect a piece of headgear as could be formed for the sun-drenched regions of the great Southwest. It was not only a hat, it was also a cigar holder; for cunningly built into it were leather receptacles holding a supply of the weed to which he was devoted.

Yet more than all, above all, Pawnee held his affection for his noble horse, Chick-Chick, an animal that had borne him through perils innumerable, over thousands of miles of plains and mountain; as intelligent and docile as a dog, as willing and untiring as a machine, as fleet as a Kentucky thoroughbred.

So when a Pawnee bullet caught Chick-Chick on the hip, though the wound was but a scratch, Pawnee Bill's blood boiled and he made for the Indian who sent the bullet.

This carried him close into the fire belt and the thick smoke.

The Indian fired again, at Pawnee Bill this time, without damage; then raced his mustang to get away from the enraged white man, and also for the purpose of drawing his pursuer into the midst of a body of Pawnees which the scout had not seen.

They were behind the fire lighters, obscured by the sudden smoke, and they had their ponies down in the tall grass.

Pawnee Bill was in the midst of them before he knew it. He was on the point of shooting his horsehair reata at the Pawnee who fled before him, intending to bring him down and make him a prisoner, when a rope stretched through the grass struck the plunging hoofs of Chick-Chick.

The next moment Chick-Chick was down and floundering; and, coming up out of the grass, Pawnee Bill saw a dozen Indians, and saw also their crouching ponies off at one side.

Pawnee Bill knew that he had been neatly caught.

Quick as lightning, he had thrown a leg over, as Chick-Chick stumbled against the rope and fell; and he landed on his feet so lightly that the Stetson was not even jarred from his head.

The lariat being now useless, he dropped it and drew a revolver.

But, quick as he was, he was not quick enough. A lance was shot out of the grass, aimed at his face. Pawnee saw it and ducked; but, though he escaped the cutting blade, the heavy lance struck him on the crown and he fell heavily beside his floundering horse.

Stunned by the knock-down blow, but not whipped, Pawnee tried to lift his revolver; but it was knocked out of his hand by the Indians, who jumped on him and by their weight forced him to the ground.

In another moment, while his head was still spinning dizzily, he was roped, with a lariat thrown round his legs and another looped round his neck and shoulders.

The Indians yelled jubilantly and gave the lariats extra turns, drawing them tighter at each turn.

Pawnee Bill was helpless.

Chick-Chick clambered up and stood trembling, with head drooped, as if he understood what had happened.

Pawnee Bill, his hands still free, was about to reach for one of his knives, but he thought better of it.

"No use committing suicide!" he said.

He flung the hair out of his eyes and stared fearlessly at his yelling captors.

They ringed him round, and he saw that they were in war paint and feathers.

"Old Wanderoo has cut the Gordian knot and decided for the warpath," he muttered. "He'll wish that he hadn't before this merry music ends."

The Indians began to get up their ponies. One of them swung to the back of Chick-Chick.

"That's my horse and saddle," gritted Pawnee, "and I'd thank you not to pollute either."

Grinning, the Indian slid to the ground; not because Pawnee Bill had said that, but because he had only been testing the "feel" of a white man's saddle.

"Is there a chief here?" Pawnee demanded, using the tongue of the Indians. "If there is, tell him, will you, that I am Pawnee Bill."

A tall Indian came forward, grotesque in his Indian paint. By his side came another Indian, who stared at Pawnee Bill.

"You Maj Lil?" this Indian demanded.

"I am Gordon W. Lillie, and I'm called Pawnee Bill; I used to have a lot of friends in this tribe, who wouldn't see me treated in this way, like a dog, if they were here."

The tall Indian, it appeared, was merely a subchief; but he was in command of this band.

In an insolent manner he gave Pawnee to understand that no matter who he was he was now their prisoner and would be treated accordingly.

Thereupon the ropes were taken off Pawnee's legs, and Chick-Chick being turned about, Pawnee was hoisted into his own saddle; then his legs were tied together at the ankles under Chick-Chick's belly.

"Hard lines, Chick-Chick; but this isn't the end of the play, remember. Buffalo Bill is out there somewhere, and the others."

An Indian smashed him in the face with a backhand blow and commanded him to close his mouth.

Pawnee gave him a ferocious look.

"I'll bear that in mind," he said, "and you will have cause to remember it later. Lead on, MacDuff!"

Surrounding him, they began to move out of the high grass, which was threatened now by the fires. They headed in a generally northward direction, and, passing the low ridge, they came to the spot where the baron and Cayuse were lying, yet did not see them.

When, from the higher grounds, Pawnee Bill noted the havoc the fires were making, saw something of the wild cattle stampede, and looked into the billowing smoke cloud that blackened the skies in the course where Buffalo Bill and old Nomad might be expected to be, he was decidedly anxious.

"Being on this side," he reflected, "the Piute and the baron may be prisoners, too; if so, I'm likely to see them soon. But Cody and Nomad ought to be off there, and that is a furnace."

The Pawnees halted on the higher ridges and watched the rolling fire.

"They're losing a lot of the cattle," he thought, "and that must be worrying them, for an Indian is sure fond of his grub basket; they didn't count on the fires going so, I suppose."

Having watched the fires a while, the Indians rode still farther out; when they swung round and headed off in the direction of the Pawnee village, far down Trout Creek.

"Old Wanderoo's home will get a scorching, too, maybe," thought the captured scout. "If the fire burns out that nest of rattlesnakes it will sure be a good thing."

But he saw a smoke cloud floating there, and knew that back fires had been started to protect the village.

Instead of going on to the village, the war party stopped to rest their ponies. They built fires on the high ground, with buffalo chips for fuel, and cooked portions of a steer which they had brought along.

Lying apart, bound and helpless, Pawnee Bill still could exercise his hearing, and he got the drift of the camp-fire talk.

"They're expecting an attack by white men, and intend to camp here and be ready to stop their progress if the white men try to go on toward the village."

"I suppose they saw the marshal's posse, and that explains it. As the marshal and his men have gone back, there will be no fighting; but perhaps these red hounds will stay here a while, which will give Cody and the others a chance to come up. I'll pit Buffalo Bill against this whole outfit and gamble that he'll win out."

Still he had grave fears for the safety of Buffalo Bill and Nomad; and, not having seen Cayuse and the baron, he feared for them, too.

"Those fires were some hot and went like the wind."

About sundown there was an addition to the war party. Another band came in from the direction of the village.

They brought news of village matters, of the dancing, and of old Wanderoo.

Pawnee Bill pricked up his ears and listened.

"The fountain of water turned to fire again yesterday," he heard the recruits report, "and the braves are on the warpath. To-morrow there will be feasting on the cattle."

"The old serpent is at his tricks once more," thought Pawnee. "He's a cunning rascal, and these redskins are fools enough to believe in him. But I wonder what that fountain of water is that turns to fire when he wants to order a war on white men? It always happens, yet I have never seen it and have never seen a white man who has or knows anything about it."

"When I was with these Pawnees, ten years ago, they were in a different section of country. Old Wanderoo was playing wizard then, but he had no card like this up his sleeve. I remember that he had some fire tricks—would breathe fire through his nostrils and spit it out of his mouth; and the Pawnees were such fools that they thought he worked miracles. He had paid good money to some white man who is a necromancer and fire eater, and so learned that; but this thing of turning a fountain of water to a fountain of fire—that gets me."

Listening to the talk of the Indians about the "war sign" displayed in the fountain, Pawnee Bill did not wonder much that the Indians were ready to obey the old Indian wizard; they were ignorant and superstitious.

"That would even set old Nomad to milling, and Little Cayuse would be down on his knees worshipping it. I'll have a chance to see that miracle, perhaps, if they take me on to the village. Old Wanderoo used to be reasonably kind to me; but he may have changed a whole lot in that respect in these years."

Scouts were sent out by the Pawnees at the coming of night, and the camp fires were extinguished.

Yet the latter precaution seemed almost needless, for fires were still spouting in the valley lands, and any troopers riding that way would have found it hard to distinguish the twinkle of camp fires from these.

Far to the westward a billowing flame pursued its destroying course. But down the creek in the direction of Wanderoo's village the back fires had prevailed, and only glowing spots in the darkness marked where the main fires had gone.

Pawnee Bill had been given food—roasted meat from the steer—and water. And his bonds, loosened up a bit when he was eating, were not afterward drawn so uncomfortably. Still his wrists and ankles were swollen and painful as he stretched himself on the ground after dark with the buffalo grass under him, the starry sky over him, and listened to the yelping of coyotes out in the night and to the talk of the Indians near at hand.

The Pawnees were still of the opinion that white men in a large party were somewhere near and might attack in the night; so, in addition to the scouts sent out, they stationed guards round the camp.

Pawnee Bill had meant to try to get away during the night; but this seemed a thing impossible when one of the braves bunked down by him, with an end of the lariat binding Pawnee's legs drawn around his own; so that if the prisoner so much as stirred during the night the Indians could be made aware of it.

"Hard luck!" thought Pawnee.

But he did not despair—while there is life there is hope. And if Buffalo Bill had not fallen a victim to the fire—a thing he would not let himself believe—he was sure the great scout would contrive his release.

The night passed without alarm.

Early in the morning the scouts began to come in; but they had seen no white men.

Pawnee Bill listened attentively to the reports they made to the subchief. What he heard was not encouraging. In spite of his hopeful determination, he began to have an uneasy fear that Cody and the others had been "wiped out."

Another band of recruits came in after the morning meal; and, being hungry, they finished what was left of the beef supply.

With them was a young chief on whom Pawnee Bill fixed his eyes.

"I've seen the fellow," he said, "and when the chance comes I'll speak to him; I believe he is Kicking Bird."

The young chief came over to look at the white prisoner when he had satisfied his hunger. Pawnee Bill addressed him in the Pawnee language, to his surprise.

"I think you are Kicking Bird," said Pawnee. "I am Major Lillie, and you ought to remember me. You were about fifteen years old then—when I was with the Pawnees, ten years ago—and you may recollect that once I whittled out a bow and arrows for you, and we practiced shooting at a target."

The young chief's eyes kindled.

He asked a question, then whirled round and shouted to the other Indians.

"Perhaps my luck is turning," thought Pawnee, hope rising in his heart.

With those who came running in answer to the call of Kicking Bird was the subchief.

He frowned when Kicking Bird declared that he knew the white man and felt friendly to him.

"He is my prisoner," said the subchief.

A wrangle ensued; but in the end the subchief seemed to prevail. The Indians walked off to the camp fires and Pawnee was left to his own reflections.

"First it's thumbs up, then it is thumbs down. Unless some more of my old Pawnee acquaintances come along, I've got to trust to Cody or myself."

The result of the wrangle seemed to be the breaking up of the camp. The Pawnees decided to go on to the village and submit the matter of the disposition of the prisoner to old Wanderoo.

Pawnee had been hoisted to the back of Chick-Chick and tied there, when a wordy war broke out between the subchief and Kicking Bird, which seemed to divide the braves into two parties.

Smothered for the time, as the Pawnees went on the wrangle broke out again and again.

The country had changed its character; scrubby bushes and little trees, fed by side streams, occurred here and there; and off on the north were rolling hills of broom sage, coarse blue-joint grass, and sagebrush.

"If I could get into those hills, with Chick-Chick under me, I'd give them a run for their money," thought Pawnee. "They have confiscated my bridle and saddle, and my hands are tied behind my back, but old Chick-Chick would only need to hear my voice to go in the course I wanted."

He made up his mind to try it if the opportunity presented.

It seemed to come almost at once.

The wordy war between Kicking Bird and the subchief had broken out again. The cause was the prisoner; but beneath this was a latent jealousy of long standing.

"Kicking Bird is afraid of the other fellow," thought Pawnee as he watched and listened.

Then it occurred to him that if the subchief should be overthrown and a humiliation put on him, Kicking Bird would have the advantage; for to cover an Indian with ridicule is usually to weaken his influence with his followers.

It was a daring, desperate, and dangerous thing which the heroic scout did.

At Pawnee Bill's word of command Chick-Chick charged the horse of the chief and sent horse and rider heavily to the ground.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROFESSOR JONES AGAIN.

Journeying toward each other, Buffalo Bill and Nomad and the baron and Cayuse met on the afternoon of the fire.

"Bawnee he iss a goneness," reported the baron, "unt ve t'ought dot you unt Nomadt vos likewise unt der same."

The report of Pawnee Bill's capture by the Pawnees stirred the fears of the scout and the borderman and made them resolve to attempt his rescue without delay.

"If that war party," said the scout, "kept to the burned ground, following it will be mere child's play and we can get on rapidly. The Piute can climb up behind me—Bear Paw will carry both of us easily; and as a led animal the pinto will get along."

Taking the trail made by Cayuse and the German, they followed it to the point where the Pawnee war party had passed along with Pawnee Bill as a prisoner.

Following the Pawnees' trail was easy—for a time. As

long as they stuck to the burned ground, the hoofs of their ponies, plowing through the black ashes, left a road like a highway.

But, as if they had accepted this as a foolish thing to do, they broke away from the burned ground after a while, and, striking the pebbly ridges, where even buffalo grass would not grow, they "puzzled" their trail.

Being in places like flint, these ridges showed at times not a single hoofmark; so that the pursuing party had to go slowly and carefully.

Night fell before they had sighted the Pawnees; but, as the general course had been in the direction of old Wanderoo's village, the scout believed the Indians were making for it.

They went on, therefore, and passed the night camp of the Pawnees without discovering it.

That night Nomad had the final watch, and was on duty in the morning when, in the gray dawn, he saw something stirring not far off.

Catching up his rifle, he scouted out to see what it meant.

"Waugh!" he said, sinking down behind sagebrush. "An Injun, I reckon."

He had made out an Indian blanket, and that was about all, mounted on an Indian cayuse; the blanket, black with ashes and soot, which so coated the face of the man that his features could not be seen.

"Ain't no eagle feathers flutterin', though," remarked Nomad, looking for this sure indication of an Indian; "but mebbysome some inimy has snatched 'em out of his raving h'ar."

The horseman would have passed Nomad by if the keen-scented cayuse he rode had not detected the presence of the white man behind the clump of sage. Then the rider looked round, peering out of the hooded blanket; and, in spite of the disfiguring grime and soot, the borderman recognized him as the "professor."

Instantly Nomad showed himself. The cayuse backed and threatened to buck, and the rider for a time had all he could do to maintain his seat.

"Whoa, you!" shouted Nomad, running out to give a helping hand; for, though he had small use for the professor, he was always willing to help any one in distress.

There was no bridle or saddle on the cayuse, and the white man had been guiding him by a turn taken with a horsehair rope round the under jaw.

Nomad caught the end of the rope and brought the beast to a halt.

"Waugh!" he yelled. "Purfessor, you seem to hev connected up with trouble; bunted inter ther fire, I'm guessing!"

Professor Archibald Stepson Jones groaned and slid off the back of his animal.

Nomad's outcries had brought out Buffalo Bill, the baron, and Little Cayuse. They reached the spot as Jones hit the ground.

"It is Cody," said the little man.

He seemed about to throw his arms in gratitude around the neck of old Nomad.

"Keep off!" he borderman yelled, side-stepping to avoid him. "Whyever y're in this fix I dunno, but you're a sight."

"I feel as if I'd been dead and buried," said Jones, with feeling. "Cody, I have a harrowing tale to communicate. And my good fortune in falling in with you seems too wonderful to be true."

He slipped back the blanket, and they saw that he was nearly naked, his body, as well as his face, being covered with soot and ashes.

"That fire!" he said.

"It struck you?" said the scout. "We were afraid that it did; but you have come through all right."

"I'll tell it to you as quick as I can," said Jones; "then I hope you will give me some water. I'm dying for water."

Buffalo Bill produced his water bottle.

Jones tipped it skyward and drank so long that the scout warned him he was in danger of overdrinking.

"That's good," he declared, when he reluctantly let the bottle go. "And now I'll tell you. I was in that fire and lived through it. I got caught in it while I was trying to reach the hills. When I saw I couldn't escape and was sure to be burned to death if I kept on, I stopped, delib-

erately shot my horse, disemboweled it, and crept inside. Ugh!

"The hell I went through after that I'll not attempt to describe; but I lived through it, though there were times when I thought I was roasting and smothering to death.

"When the fire had passed I crept out. Sunset came while I was trying to make my way out of the burned area. I was nearly dead, but I wandered on. Just before dark I reached an unburned area. There I came on a singular thing: an Indian cayuse, feeding, with a lariat round its neck, and the other end of the lariat hitched to the wrist of a dead Indian. When I first saw that, I thought the Indian might be alive and trying to get me; but when I looked closer I saw that he was dead.

"I accounted for it by supposing that in the stampede, or perhaps later, the Indian had been thrown and killed by the cayuse. He had been riding with that lariat tied to his arm. That kept the cayuse from going farther; and he had remained there, fastened to the dead body of his master.

"I secured the cayuse and took the clothing of the Indian. I was glad to get out of the things I had on, you may be sure. So, dressed in the Indian's blanket—and that's about all—I mounted and came on.

"And now I have found you!"

The scout looked at the little man with a great increase of admiration. Professor Archibald Stepson Jones was a "sight," yet he had showed an ingenuity and quick resourcefulness that lifted him in the scout's estimation.

"And having found you," said the little man, this time with a sad shake of his head, "I intend to stay with you, no matter what you say."

Buffalo Bill's eyes twinkled.

"You saw no one—no living person?"

"Except yourselves, none."

"Pawnee Bill has been captured by the Pawnees. We set out to trail them, but have temporarily lost the trail; but they were making for Wanderoo's village, we feel sure, and we are going there, or as close to it as we can get."

"I'm going with you," said Jones, brightening perceptibly.

"We're willing to share our camp and food with you—as a man in distress."

Taken into the camp, the "professor" was given water and soap so that he could wash himself. This took time; but when he was through he was somewhat presentable, in spite of the scanty Indian wardrobe under the Indian blanket.

Then he was given food—all he wanted; and water.

"I have put these homely legs under some of the best mahogany in New York," he said, when he had finished; "yet I'll say to you that Delmonico's never set up such a feed. A thousand thanks, Cody."

Cayuse had loafed out to the edge of the sagebrush and was watching the surrounding plains and dry ridges.

Suddenly he flitted into view, on the run.

"Pawnees!" he squeaked.

Worming their way to where he had been, and looking out, they saw the Pawnees, a strong band of warriors, not half a mile away. They had swung into view there, round a hill, when sighted by the Piute.

Buffalo Bill pulled his field glasses round, took them out of the case, and leveled them. A cry escaped him.

"It's the band that has Pawnee!" he cried.

Nomad snatched the glasses and screwed them into his eyes.

"Right ye aire, Buffler!" he said. "Tied ter an Injun cayuse, as I'm a sinner!"

The Pawnees came on and stopped not far off.

"Idt iss der dime!" whispered the baron, fingering his revolvers. "Der dime to do a t'ing iss vhen idt can pe dit. Oof ve charge dhem now—"

"We'll shore be killed!" added Nomad.

"They're in a wrangle of some kind," said the scout.

Then they beheld the act that has already been described.

Chick-Chick charged the horse of the chief and sent horse and rider heavily to the ground.

"Halleluyer!" whispered Nomad, unable to control his admiration for the daring deed. "Glee-ory! Ye jest can't hold Pawnee down, even ef ye ring him in with Injuns and tie him."

"Yoost der same," warned the baron, "he vill now giddt idt in der necks."

The baron was not a prophet. Instead of Pawnee "getting it in the neck," the next instant the angry and jealous redskins were mixing with each other in a lively fight.

Buffalo Bill's party ran for their horses. As soon as mounted, they charged out, heading for the Indians.

But they were too slow to accomplish the rescue of Pawnee Bill. The Indians ceased fighting—the mix-up being about over, without serious results to either side—and turned in flight with their prisoner, jerking Chick-Chick along in spite of Pawnee's efforts to stop him.

Having seen the white men break from cover and come riding toward them, the Pawnees had come to the panicky conclusion that the large party of white men they had been expecting was right there and would boil out upon them the next minute.

Bear Paw, Hide Rack, and the baron's mule made a good burst of speed, with Cayuse and Jones outdistanced at once; and it was a novel chase—three men pursuing a score and a half of mounted Pawnees.

Such a race could not last long. Bear Paw drew ahead and was in the lead. Seeing themselves followed by a single man and getting over their foolish fright, the Pawnees slackened speed, and, dropping a rear guard, they began to make a defense, sending shots pattering round Buffalo Bill.

"Another day!" he said, drawing rein.

Reluctantly he saw the Indians disappearing with Pawnee Bill in their midst.

Nomad and the baron came up, wild for a continuance of the chase.

"It would be useless and foolish," said the scout.

"You an' me and ther baron aire good fer thet hull crowd," Nomad boasted.

"You're willing enough, Nomad, I know that; but they'd get us if we did. They could keep ahead of us to the village and get us there, if they didn't drop us before that time. Besides, I think they would give us a stand-up fight as soon as they felt sure we had no one behind us."

"Vot iss to be dit?" demanded the baron. "Idt iss making me fighting mat to see idt."

"Me, too, baron; I'm thet het up I cain't see hardly."

"We'll wait for Cayuse and talk it over. I think, from what I saw, that Pawnee has friends in that band; if so, he will not be tortured or killed—not at once; there will be a powwow over him, and that will give us a chance to do some fine work. I'm going into that village to-night."

"Hooray! Count me in with ye."

"Also-o unt me."

"Here comes Cayuse."

"An' ther perfessor is hoppin' along behind him on thet mustang. Thet war a quar story he told, Buffler."

"Nodt so kveer as he looked," declared the baron.

"Nothin' could be quarer than thet. He's goin' ter airn them emeralds ef he ever gits 'em."

Little Cayuse arrived, larruping the pinto, which was still too stiff for fast traveling. Not far behind him the little man came galloping on the Indian mustang.

"Too bad, Cody," said Jones. "I saw it all, but was too far off to send anything along but my good wishes. I suppose it is all up with your friend Pawnee Bill?"

"We don't think so. We intend to follow to the village and make a try there. We won't go on right now, for if they see that we are following with this small party they'll try to ambush us."

"What Pa-e-has-ka do now?" asked the Piute.

"Pull your pony round, Cayuse. We're going back to that camp. That will make the Pawnees think we perhaps have a party there. Then when they're far enough along we'll go on, following their trail."

"Ye noticed them Injuns was in war paint?" said Nomad.

"Yes."

"Et means thet old Wanderoo has shore dug up ther hatchet."

"We expected it."

"And et is a certain indercation thet thar is goin' ter be hot times along this border."

"Der oxidemendt oof idt suidts me," the baron declared; "budt I am avraidt vor Bawnee now. Oof Toofer hadt peen yoost a liddle fasdter, I vouldt haf peen fightt-ing dose Inchuns yedt."

Back in camp, the little "professor" was a ludicrous and pathetic sight, crouching by the camp fire in his Indian blanket; but his active mind was busy.

"Cody," he said, as they waited, "I suppose you didn't happen to get sight of that negro anywhere after the fire started? I got through; I wonder if he did?"

"You're thinking of the emeralds?" said the scout. "You can say whatever you have to say about them freely, for my friends know all that you have told me."

"All right, then; although I would have preferred it different."

"Ve are honesdt men," said the baron, "unt a secret idt gan keeb us."

Professor Archibald Stepson Jones pulled out of the blanket a string; it was a piece of the blanket twisted into a cord, and it went round his neck; the other end held a leather wallet.

"Not having a pocket any more," he said, "I devised this after my wonderful escape and finding the Indian."

From the wallet he took the stained paper he had shown to Buffalo Bill before.

"This tells of the emerald cache," he explained, and passed it to the baron. "Look it over."

"I haf heardt apowet idt," the baron confessed, as he read it.

"If we can find those emeralds," said Jones, "I'm willing to divvy with this party for help. I know you will let me go with you now—as it would be too inhuman for you to set me adrift. Still——"

"Still, as you brought yourself into this fix," said the scout, "you don't deserve any help from us."

"That isn't what I was going to say," he protested. "I was going to say that as the Pawnees are now on the warpath, I can't do anything by myself, and will need your help after we reach the village."

"Dhey vill hellup dhemselves to your scalb," warned the baron, passing the paper to Nomad.

"One thing—about that negro," said the professor. "If he came through that fire, he is going to make me trouble. Twice he has tried to kill me, as you know; once in the billiard room in Pagoda Springs and then when he shot up the stage."

"Dell me," said the baron, "how idt iss dot vun man gan do so mooch shoodting by his lonesomeness?"

"I think he has some kind of repeating revolver," said Jones; "that is the only way to account for it."

The borderman recounted the incident of the rapid shooting from the top of the ridge which had piled up a lot of dead cattle and split the herd, and how afterward they had found there the trail of a single man.

"That was the negro," said Jones. "I'm gambling gold eagles against pennies that he went on west, then, and got away from the fire. If so, we shall see him again, and he is going to make trouble for me. You see, he knows about those emeralds and is determined to get them; but he has no right to them."

"How did he happen to know about them?" asked the scout.

"He overheard me telling about them, and got hold of this letter and copied it; that is how."

He looked round and dropped his voice to a high whisper, at the same time flicking his defective eye in the old familiar manner.

"I'm going to confide to you another thing: That man is not a negro."

"No?" exploded the German.

"He is a white man. He has blacked himself up in some way and is playing this negro game now."

"Vor vhy?"

"Because he is afraid to show his face anywhere, even on the border, without a disguise. That man, gentlemen, is Bob Dalton. Now the secret is out."

There was a moment of silence, in which the little man's game eye bored each member of the party in turn, not neglecting even Little Cayuse.

"You don't believe it?" he asked.

"We have no reason to disbelieve it," said the scout. "But Bob Dalton——"

"Is one of the biggest desperadoes unhung; that is what you were going to say. He is a typical bad man of the border, with more killings to his credit than you can count on your two hands. He slaughtered the Macross family,

up in Marengo, because the father wouldn't let him marry the girl. He shot down the president of the Sioux City National Bank in a bank holdup last June. And he was at the head of the gang of road agents that put crossties on the Union Pacific Railroad and ditched the California night express at Sunderland Junction, killing fourteen of the passengers; the gang made a fifty-thousand-dollar haul out of that—out of the Wells Fargo express car.

"I see you're familiar with all this." His game eye roved round again. "I could go on and tell you more, but it isn't necessary. The supposed negro who tried to down me at Pagoda Springs is Bob Dalton. Do you want to know more, to be against him?"

"Budt ve haf only your vord vor idt," urged the baron.

"True, true," admitted the little man, dropping back into his usual quiet manner. "It is too true."

"You are willing," said the scout, "to give us the reasons on which you base your belief that this supposed negro is the Western desperado, Bob Dalton?"

"My chief reason is that I was on his track for five hundred miles before striking Pagoda Springs. Still, as your German friend has so courteously intimated, you have only my word for that."

"I've been takin' you fer a reg'lar tinhorn," Nomad confessed bluntly.

"Which means, I believe, an all-round gambler, swindler, and confidence man?"

"Jest about thet."

"You grieve me, Mr. Nomad," the little man declared.

"Waal, ye ain't hurryin' ter confess ever'thing," said the borderman. "Ye ain't tellin' us why you wus chasin' this dago nigger."

"I thought I had told that. I chased him to keep him from getting to the emerald cache ahead of me and getting the goods. I didn't know him in his monkey-and-hand-organ-and-negro disguise there in Pagoda Springs. Otherwise he wouldn't have had a chance to pull on me from that back room."

He flicked his game optic round at Nomad and smiled; and that made him look even more grotesque in his Indian blanket.

"Does that satisfy you, you doubter?" he demanded.

"Mebbyso et does; leastways, I'll keep a tight bit on my suspicions an' see how you play ther game. Anyway, ye can count on me bein' ag'inst Bob Dalton, ef thet is him."

Buffalo Bill consulted his watch; then, rising, he walked out and trained his field glasses on the vanishing Pawnees. They were nearly out of sight.

"We'll go on now," he announced; "and to-night we'll hover round the Pawnee village, ready to strike."

CHAPTER IX.

PAWNEE BILL AMONG FRIENDS AND FOES.

Old Wanderoo was the Pawnee chieftain, as well as medicine man, and, though an unmitigated savage, a man of brains.

This was shown, in part, by his cunning adaptability, whereby he was ready to seize on the white man's knowledge, discoveries, and inventions and turn them to his own uses.

Years before he had increased his power over his tribe by learning certain chemical fire tricks of a wandering conjuror and fire eater whom he had seen give an exhibition in a certain Western town to which he went occasionally, the Pawnees at the time being on peace terms with the white men.

But the thing to which attention is called now—a thing admired by Pawnee Bill as soon as he saw it—was a wide fire guard, drawn by plows, between the fires in the high grass to the west and the village. The furrows made by the Indians were ragged enough, to be sure—the plows had been drawn by dozens of struggling and kicking cayuses attached to the plows with ropes—but they had turned the grass under and presented to the fires a wide black ribbon of rich mold which they could not burn and could not leap. In addition to this, and for greater security, back fires had been built along this ribbon of upturned soil on the side toward the threatening fires.

For miles before this fire guard was reached, the Pawnee party conducting Pawnee Bill rode through a region black

and desolated, where not a single green thing remained; but on crossing the guard, the grass grew high and luxuriant and pony herds fed in it, together with the cattle that had been saved from the fires and had not been killed by the Indians for their feasting.

The plows with which the work had been done lay in the sun, and Pawnee Bill saw on them the stenciled name of a St. Louis plow manufactory. Old Wanderoo had bought them in Pagoda Springs more than a year before, explaining that he meant to try farming; and the Pagoda Springs *Herald*, on the strength of it, had published a long editorial, pointing with pride to this indication that the Pawnees were on the highroad to civilization. But even then the crafty old chief and medicine man was taking a long-range look at the warpath.

The Pawnee village lay on a high bank of Trout Creek and consisted of nearly a hundred buffalo-skin tepees, with some small houses built of sticks and stones plastered with mud.

Down by the stream was a queer, pagodalike structure, also of sticks, stones, and mud plastering, which inclosed the mysterious boiling spring. The little building had an extended wing, which covered an additional spring that was usually dry, but was connected at times with the principal spring.

The overflow of the spring rolled down a small waterway into Trout Creek.

For days at a time old Wanderoo was accustomed to remain out of sight in this building, which he called his medicine lodge. When he did so, no Indian was permitted to come near it without his consent.

Before its wooden door hung his medicine bag of weasel skin, his painted shield of buffalo hide, his pipestone medicine pipe, and a pair of crossed lances.

When he "made medicine," the pipe and the weasel skin were taken into the medicine lodge, so that the Indians always knew when he was at his incantations.

They believed in his power supremely.

Pawnee Bill was not conducted to the medicine lodge, but to a large tepee in the midst of the village, where old Wanderoo lived with his wives and numerous progeny. There the rival subchiefs and warriors delivered voluble orations, one side favoring Pawnee, the other opposing him.

The fact that old Wanderoo knew him and he had made friends in the village ten years before stood the dauntless scout in good stead now, and no doubt saved his life; for Wanderoo was at the moment in a violent rage against the white men.

When he had listened to the speeches of the friends and foes of Pawnee, Wanderoo beckoned to the Indian guard, and Pawnee was taken from the horse to which he had been lashed so long, and conducted into the big tepee.

Round the opening Indians still remained, talking and gesticulating. The whole village had been thrown into an uproar by the return of the war party, and the report that white men had been sighted, one of whom had been brought in as a prisoner.

"You have come again," said Wanderoo, when the cramped and stiffened scout stood before him. "Once you came as a friend, but now as a foe!"

He addressed the scout in Pawnee, knowing that he understood the language.

"I have come again as a friend," Pawnee emphasized.

"Then why were you with the war party of white men?" the chief demanded, with an angry flash of his eyes.

His eyes were black and keen, with a fiery glitter; his face was cadaverous, and he seemed old, yet he still had the animation and energy of a much younger man; his black hair, unplumed, was streaked with silver; and his thin, quivering lips, wrinkling at the corners, showed cunning.

"I am glad that I have been brought before the great chief and medicine man, Wanderoo," said Pawnee. "He is a man of intelligence and can understand. I was not with a war party; there were only five of us——"

"Seven!" snapped Wanderoo. "My warriors saw seven men, and they knew that more were farther back. A large war party came out from Pagoda Springs, and you were with it. My warriors saw the trail of that war party; it numbered thirty men, and they saw some of

them. My old friend, Major Lillie, begins to lie as soon as he opens his mouth."

Pawnee Bill flushed. He saw his position was delicate, and he did not like to be so baldly accused of falsehood.

"That larger party," he explained, "went back to Pagoda Springs. They were not really fighting men, not a war party; they came out through curiosity and because they wanted to make other white men think they were brave. As for our own men, there are but five."

The fiery eyes snapped and the thin lips of old Wanderoo wrinkled in a skeptical smile.

"What of the other white man and the black man?" he asked.

"The black man I know nothing about—there was a black man in Pagoda Springs, and he must be the one, as he disappeared from there. The other white man must have been the little man who wanted to go with us and then followed us."

"Let it pass," said the chief, unconvinced.

"My brother is a great chief and medicine man. His eye is like the eagle's or the flash of an Indian lance; he is brave as the bull buffalo in its anger, and his heart is warm as the breast of a dove; so I know that he will not deal harshly with his friend."

"Is he my friend?" Wanderoo shot back.

"The leader of my party is the great scout and friend of the Indians, Pa-e-has-ka. And Pa-e-has-ka was sent into the Pawnee country to discover the truth of the wild stories that Wanderoo was sending his braves on the war-path and was thirsting for the blood of white men. Pa-e-has-ka did not believe that this could be true."

"I have seen and heard of Pa-e-has-ka; let him keep far from the Pawnee village now. He is no friend of Wanderoo."

"Even in his dreams he thinks only of the good of Wanderoo and the Pawnees."

"My old friend Major Lillie has been taking lessons from the serpent," said Wanderoo.

"My heart has not two sides, like an Indian shield; it can all be seen at once," Pawnee Bill asserted.

Wanderoo reflected.

"Later," he said, "I will see. Now I must hear the reports of the warriors and seek counsel in the medicine lodge."

He waved his hand.

Two warriors came forward from their respectful position by the lodge opening and conducted Pawnee Bill to his prison.

Shortly afterward old Wanderoo sent one of his own squaws to wait on the white man who had once been his friend and adviser; and Pawnee began to hope that he was not going to have a hard time. He had not been tied, but a strong guard had been stationed about the tepee in which he was confined.

"Cody may come to-night," was his thought, "so I must lie awake and be ready."

But Buffalo Bill did not come that night.

CHAPTER X.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MEDICINE LODGE.

For the Pawnees the night was one of alarms and excitement. Expecting an attack from the white man's war party, guards were thrown out beyond the village boundaries, scouts went slipping through the darkness in every direction, and the warriors in the village "slept on their arms."

Old Wanderoo remained in his medicine lodge, working charms to hearten his warriors and circumvent the white men.

In the gray of the early morning the watching warriors who looked toward the medicine lodge fancied they beheld another manifestation of the wonder working of the Pawnee prophet.

A strange-looking box rested by the door on a single leg, and on top of the box was a tiny, fantastically dressed creature which could not be an animal, as it wore clothing and had a humanlike face.

Those who discovered this wonder drew back, tiptoeing, and informed others. The news of the miracle went whispering like a wind through the village. Out of the

lodge came warriors, squaws, and children; and, standing off at a respectful distance, they stared at the queer things visible at the door of the medicine lodge.

One of the boldest of the braves advancing upon the door, the queer creature on the box lifted a feathered red cap to him and executed a somersault on the box as if for the brave's amusement.

A shout went up from the watching and bewildered Indians.

The queer thing on the box turned another lithe somersault and lifted its cap again.

The feather in the cap, and the fact that the face of the queer thing was brown in color, something like that of an Indian, caused the whisper to run through the watching throng that this was an "Indian devil."

None of them had ever seen an Indian devil, but they had heard about Indian devils since childhood, and they decided this must be one.

So they gave the box and the devil a wider berth.

The courageous warrior who had made the first advance went near again and called to Wanderoo that an Indian devil was sitting on a reddish-colored box by the door of the medicine lodge, and he thought the devil ought to be exorcised before he brought destruction to the Pawnees.

Thereupon Wanderoo thrust his hand through the opening in the door and waved them to silence.

The confused chatter and childlike screams of fear breaking from the throats of the assembled Pawnees brought Pawnee Bill to the entrance of his prison lodge; then his attention was drawn to the sight at which all the Pawnees were staring.

"By the sacred O-zu-ha!" floated from his lips.

He had been sound asleep, in the early dawn, after a night of wakefulness, and for a moment he thought that the dream sleep still stuck in his eyes. But he knew better in an instant.

"The hand organ and monkey of that negro, who is supposed not to be a negro," he breathed. "Now, what can that mean, I wonder?"

The guards had left their posts by the prison lodge, so nothing prevented Pawnee Bill from stepping forth.

Glancing round, he was asking himself if this was not his opportunity to escape, when a thought struck him, killing the desire.

"Is Buffalo Bill back of that?"

Buffalo Bill had disappointed him by not appearing in the village during the night. He had accounted for the delay, as inevitable, by the wandering scouts that prowled everywhere, and by the fact that a strong guard had been thrown out and all the warriors had been watchful.

Yet Pawnee's thought now was that the daring scout had penetrated the Indian lines and had even got inside the medicine lodge.

"Pard Bill is equal to it," he mused. "There was a lot of confusion during the night, and shots fired right here in the village by excited braves, and he could take advantage of that. As old Wanderoo is some of a fighter when he gets started, I judge that unless necarnis caught the old savage napping, which might have been the case, there was a lively scrap in that medicine lodge at the time I was hitting the dream pike."

He watched the dancing monkey on the hand organ, and the Indians who feared to go near it.

The monkey jumped to the ground, then jumped back to the box.

"It's chained to the box," concluded Pawnee.

"If it isn't an Indian devil, it is something else. Well, I'll agree with you. You never saw a monkey. It's got clothing on, you say; but not exactly white man's clothing."

He looked at the monkey.

"Again I agree with you. White men don't, as a usual thing, wear feathers in their caps and red jackets and breeches. The feather is somewhat Indian; and the tail—yes, I agree with you some more, the tail says that it must be a devil."

He stared at the door of the medicine lodge.

"If Pard Bill is in there, what's his game? He has come to help me, of course. Perhaps he thought I was held in there as a prisoner, and so made for it; and then he connected with Wanderoo. Maybe the shots I heard came when he had his fight with Wanderoo, and that roused the Indians and Pard Bill was brought to a

standstill. Necarnis has got packloads of courage, yet he has caution; which is just as important, if not more so. He wouldn't try to fight the whole Pawnee village, for that would blot him off the map; he'd wait and try something more promising. If I'm guessing right, likely I'll have to wait until night comes round again before I know the meaning of it."

But the thing which puzzled Pawnee and made him doubt somewhat that his surmising was in line with the truth was the monkey, likewise the hand organ.

"Deserted Jericho! Wonder if he collided with the owner of the monkey out there in the darkness before he did with the medicine man? If the negro is in the medicine lodge, he'd have the monkey and hand organ under cover in there with him, wouldn't he? If not, why not?"

Pawnee Bill took off his Stetson and scratched his puzzled head. Incidentally, through force of habit, he fished in the crown of the hat for a cigar.

He grumbled when he found no cigars there.

"I forgot that the beastly Pawnees took every smoke I had and burned them up yesterday."

Settling the hat again on his head, he reconsidered the situation:

"The Indian cayuses are out there in the valley, half a mile off, and every one on a lariat; and Chick-Chick is with them, no doubt. I couldn't get out there in broad daylight without carrying a cargo of lead that would sink a boat. So there is no use thinking of that. If I went in the other direction, I'd be in as bad a way, and on foot, without the chance of a mount."

He looked all round.

"They've tucked Chick-Chick out of sight somewhere, anyhow, so that sight of him wouldn't tempt me to make a fool break for liberty and force them to shoot me. Wanderoo isn't ready to put me under the ground for a while, thanks to the fact that I did a good turn or two for him ten years or so ago; but he doesn't intend that I shall escape."

"Off in front, back of the medicine lodge, is the river. To reach it I'd have to hurdle that line of warriors. I'm free now, so far as guards and bonds go; yet I can't see a way out of the village, and in the night I was as close herded as if I were a spotted cayuse of the value of a thousand squaws. This is enough to make a man sick."

Again he listened to the excited talk of the Pawnees who were watching the monkey.

"If I could get through that line of warriors and join Buffalo Bill in the medicine lodge—if he is there. That's it—if he is there! I don't know that. Likely I'd get an Indian lance through me if I tried it."

Four of the bravest warriors began to advance upon the monkey.

It was comical to watch that advance. They went on by fits and starts, ready to break back if the thing they feared made a motion.

When the braves reached the side of the monkey it hopped about and gave an excited squeal; whereupon two of them raced back to the warrior line for safety.

The other two, though they drew back a little, stood their ground manfully. As if to compliment their courage, the monkey hopped to the top of the box, whisked off his feathered cap, made them a bow, and turned a somersault.

Squeals that were half of fear and half of laughter ran through the crowding lines of the Pawnees.

Grown still braver, one of the warriors stepped up to the box; then he took hold of the handle. About to lift the box, or examine it, he involuntarily turned the handle.

Music came out of the box—a bar of "Wearing of the Green."

The Indian dropped it like a hot cake and tumbled back. The other Indian turned in headlong fright. The lines of warriors shrieked and yelled.

Released, the hand organ tumbled over against the door of the medicine lodge, which had been opened a crack when the hand of the medicine man was waved from the interior.

The chained monkey, dragged along with the box, also fell in the doorway, which was driven wider open.

Suddenly the hand of the medicine man shot out, seized

the hand organ by its single support, and snaked it and the monkey into the medicine lodge and out of sight.

The door was slammed.

The Pawnees shrieked and yelled again and shouted the name of Wanderoo.

But no answer came out of the medicine lodge.

"I'm some up a stump," muttered Pawnee, "and these ki-yis are up a dozen. That was sure an Indian's hand—from the looks."

For hours after that, though the village fairly boiled with excitement, nothing was doing in the medicine lodge.

It was ten o'clock before Pawnee was given anything to eat or drink, so taken were the Indians with the mystery that had been thus thrust upon them.

When the food and water came, it was brought by Kicking Bird, who apologized for the forgetfulness of the squaw whose business it was to bring it.

But Pawnee soon saw that the real reason Kicking Bird remembered his former friend was that he wanted to get his opinion of the "Indian devil."

"If it was an Indian devil," said Kicking Bird gravely, "then the medicine man has slain it; he pulled it into the medicine lodge that he might kill it. Wanderoo is a great and powerful medicine man."

"Wanderoo is the greatest of all medicine men," Pawnee asserted. "What was the meaning of the thing we saw I do not know; but if you can bring me one of the smoke weeds that were in the hat I wear—they were taken from me yesterday—we will talk this marvelous thing over."

Kicking Bird regretted that all the smoke weeds had been burned by the warriors who took them.

"On their heads be the curse of My Lady Nicotine!" said Pawnee in English.

Then he asked Kicking Bird if he could not have a pipe and tobacco.

"A clean pipe," he urged, "that has not been used; and some good tobacco, without too much willow bark in it. Then we will talk of this wonder."

Kicking Bird hastened off and returned soon with a curiously wrought stone pipe that had not been used and a handful of tobacco. He offered his own flint and steel for the lighting.

"You are my friend," he said, "and may you smoke in peace."

"A little too much willow in this tobacco, and it smells rank; but beggars mustn't be choosers," muttered Pawnee, as he struck sparks into the pipe bowl and smoked up.

"What is the opinion of the Pawnees?" he asked.

"That it was an Indian devil, and the medicine man has killed it."

"And the box which made the queer music?"

"Was that music?" asked Kicking Bird incredulously.

"I wouldn't dare venture to call it that myself, Kicking Bird, but by some it is considered music. You were listening to a strain of that fine old Irish melody, 'The Wearing of the Green.'"

Kicking Bird stared his lack of comprehension. Half of it had been in Pawnee and half in English, and he could make nothing of either.

Pawnee laughed at the Indian's queer expression.

"Me no sabe," said Kicking Bird, dropping into English.

"What are the warriors going to do now?" asked Pawnee.

"Watch the medicine lodge to learn the will of the prophet; and watch the grasslands and the hills to keep the white men from getting near."

"No white men have been seen to-day?"

"None."

"As for myself, now," said Pawnee, taking out the pipe and looking his Indian friend straight in the face, "what are the Pawnees going to do with me?"

"Wait for the will of the prophet."

"So it all depends on the prophet?"

"Yes."

"I have some friends here who remember me and feel kindly toward me—friends like yourself. They can do nothing?"

"Nothing."

"But they wouldn't let me be tortured or killed by the other faction?"

Kicking Bird wasn't so sure of that; the friends of Pawnee Bill were inferior in numbers to those who were against him and who would like to kill him simply because he was a white man.

"If the prophet says kill you, it would be done, and we could not help it."

"Then we'll hope his bloodthirstiness will be satisfied by killing the Indian devil," said Pawnee.

"If the white men outside come and fight the Pawnees here, then you will be killed," said Kicking Bird.

"We're going to hope they won't come, then."

He looked off at the medicine lodge.

"What if the prophet does as I've heard he sometimes does—keeps still in there and makes no sign?"

"The Pawnees will wait."

"Thanks, Kicking Bird. This is a fine pipe and good tobacco, and you are my friend."

Kicking Bird stood up suddenly, as if he had not heard this, and stared off at the medicine lodge.

"The fountain of water has stopped!" he cried.

Pawnee Bill stood up, too, then, and stepped to the door of his tepee.

The Indians on the slope, who, ever since the disappearance into it of the hand organ and monkey, had been closely watching the medicine lodge, were in a state of silent, yet of heaving, excitement.

The door of the medicine lodge had been thrown wide open, and Pawnee could look right through it. In the middle of the small space visible was a cuplike object resembling the top of a fountain.

"The fountain has stopped, you say?"

"There!" said Kicking Bird, pointing, while the muscles of his arm jerked. "You see where the water comes from out of that, but it does not come now."

"Water shoots up out of that?"

"Always, except when the medicine man wills otherwise; then it stops."

"I see. Then what happens?"

"Sometimes nothing, and the water commences to flow again; but when the prophet has a strong message to deliver, in place of the water there rises a stream of fire."

"That's interesting, at least," said Pawnee.

For five minutes, while the Indians out on the slope and in the lodges watched the suspended fountain spell-bound, Pawnee Bill stood with Kicking Bird looking down at the medicine lodge.

A cry rose from the lips of the young warrior:

"Look! The fire spouts!"

With a hissing roar, a flame shot out of the cuplike opening and burned there like a torch.

"By the sacred O-zu-ha!" exclaimed Pawnee. "That's a queer thing."

"It's the war sign of the prophet," said Kicking Bird.

"Does it always mean war?"

"Not always. Sometimes it stands for a great hunt or a great feast; but now, when the war talk is heard, it must stand for war. Last week it blazed out, and the week before, and the week before that time. War with the white men must come; the great prophet so wills it and the spirits have spoken it."

He bowed his head.

The Indians on the slope were staring as if stupefied by this manifestation of the power of the Pawnee prophet, even though they had seen it again and yet again.

For five minutes or more the fire spouted; then it gradually decreased and died out.

The door of the medicine lodge swung shut.

A little later it flew open again; then Pawnee Bill saw the fountain of water playing.

"Deserted Jericho!" he breathed. "I don't wonder that old Wanderoo has got these Pawnees right under his thumb; that has made me feel queer myself, even though I know it is nothing but hocus-pocus."

"What does the white man say?" asked the awed voice of Kicking Bird.

"That Wanderoo is a great prophet."

"The greatest of prophets!" said Kicking Bird.

He looked at his white friend sadly.

"So," he added, "if he should order the white prisoner to be killed, no one would dare lift a hand to stop it."

"Not even you?"

"Not even Kicking Bird."

CHAPTER XI.

THE CAPTURE OF OLD WANDEROO.

Well out beyond the Pawnee village, shadowed by the darkness, Buffalo Bill and his party had lain for a while, well aware that roving scouts were weaving to and fro through the high grass in dangerous proximity.

During the day Pawnee had been taken into the village, and the scout was planning a bold, yet crafty, entrance to effect his rescue.

As the party had their horses with them, which they kept down in the grass, their discovery seemed imminent, for the near presence of redskins always alarmed the animals.

"You'd better muzzle that mule," Nomad grumbled to the baron; "otherwise he's mebbysso goin' ter hee-haw right out, an' ther jig will then be up."

"Oof dot Toofer moeel sings any moosic to-nighdt," said the baron, "I vill keek his sites in. Budt he vond't, no more as Hite Rack."

"You'd better muzzle your cayuse, Jones," the scout advised the professor.

"Done!" said Jones, and ripped off a piece of his Indian blanket for the purpose. "But I'll need help."

Nomad helped him make the blanket muzzle and adjust it to the nose of the cayuse.

Finally Buffalo Bill decided to muzzle all the animals and give them into the care of the Piute.

"Cayuse," he said, "you know that rocky hollow, where we came down into the big grass. We're going to muzzle the caballos, and you are to take them there and stay with them."

A blanket was torn into strips, and when the muzzles made from it had been applied, they strung the lariats together, and Cayuse, mounting Navi, rode off silently through the darkness, leading the other animals.

"Now," said the scout, when the Piute had disappeared, "we're going to get close in and determine, when we're near the village, just what is to be attempted."

"Ef ye go in," said Nomad, "remember that I'm biddin' fer ther honor of goin' along."

"Cody," drawled the little man, "I think I've shown I'm not lacking in grit, so I'm putting in my bid, too. Them emeralds are in there somewhere, you know; I think right in the village. They must be, from that description, if the village is of any size."

"Der emeraldts he iss piting you yedt, huh?" grumbled the baron.

"They are, baron," Jones admitted.

The high grass concealed them well, but they moved slowly, and whenever they judged from sounds that a scout was near, they sank down into it.

They were within half a mile of the village when the Piute, returning, made them crouch down again, as they thought he was an Indian scout squirming through the grass.

The scout had the noose of his lariat in hand for a throw at him when the Piute rose and grunted out his name.

"Waugh!" snorted Nomad. "What in time——"

"Pawnees ketch um caballos," the Piute reported breathlessly; "so me come tell pronto."

"Ach! My moeel!" whispered the baron. "He iss a gonestess now, I pedt you."

"How did it happen, Cayuse?" the scout questioned.

"Me on Navi," said Cayuse, "lead um caballos; then, whoosh! Navi hit rope in grass and fall. Me fall in grass, too. Many Pawnees all round, run to caballos; me no savvy them Pawnees there."

"Mitout dose caballos ve are in a fixin's," groaned the baron.

"When Pawnees run to caballos," continued the Piute, "me make um slide pronto."

"So they didn't ketch ye. Ye're as lively as a cricket, Cayuse; but et's a pity ye didn't hear them ki-yis before they had the caballos."

"The Piute is not to blame; the same thing might have happened to any one of us. The Pawnees are slick Indians, and horses moving through the grass make a good deal of noise. They heard him coming with them and laid a trap for him. I'm thankful they didn't haul him in, too."

Still, Buffalo Bill regretted that Bear Paw had fallen

into the hands of the crafty Pawnees quite as much as the others could regret the loss of their animals.

"That's bound ter be er band o' Pawnee mustangs round hyar some'eres," said Nomad, trying to get consolation; "and we might connect up with et an' git mounts ef we need 'em. Right now we don't need 'em."

"We'll go right ahead on this plan now," said the scout, "and see what we can do for Major Lillie; that's the important thing. When we have him free again we can think about getting our own horses back, or getting others."

"K'rect," Nomad agreed.

They had not moved out of their position when they heard a crashing in the grass in the direction of the village.

"Yumpin' yack rappits, vot iss idt?" said the baron.

"Give me three guesses," said Nomad, "an' I'd say ever' time thet a bull buffalo is chargin' down on us."

"It sounds like it," the scout agreed.

He ran the noose of his lariat through his hand and slipped forward.

The stampeding sound came straight on; then it changed to a sudden and wild floundering.

"Buffalo Bill has caught it, whatever it is," whispered Jones.

"Tally, an' carry one," panted Nomad, wriggling forward.

"I am vandting oxcidemendt, unt idt iss coming my vay," said the baron, scrambling forward with him.

On gaining the side of the scout, they found him engaged in a furious struggle with an Indian he had caught in the noose of his rope.

The fight was of a furious character; and the scout, trying to stifle an outcry from the lips of his captive, had his hands full, while he also tried to overcome him.

"Bear a hand," he whispered hoarsely; "I've got hold of a giant."

Nomad threw himself into the mêlée.

"I haf got him py der feedts," whispered the baron, catching a thrashing foot.

But he tumbled backward with a gurgle when the flailing foot smashed him in the face.

All five of the party seemed needed to subdue the man whom the scout had thrown down; and then he did not cease to struggle until a bight of the rope round his neck had squeezed the breath out of his body.

"He's an Indian, all right," panted the scout when the combat was over; "but I never before gripped one that put up such a fight."

"I am vondering," said the baron, "oof dot vos heardt py der willage in."

"It might have been," the scout admitted. "And if he rouses up now and lets out a yell—"

Another strip came off his blanket and was formed into a gag for the redskin's mouth.

Then the Pawnee's hands and feet were tied with lariats.

"Let us get back with him," said the scout, "where we can see what we have captured. It's a good three hours or more yet until morning."

Cautiously they carried the unconscious and bound Pawnee back through the grass until they were at the base of the hills.

He was thrashing in his bonds by that time, and was trying to cry out in spite of the gag.

Buffalo Bill ventured to strike a match, its light shielded by the bodies of the men grouped before the prisoner. One look the scout gave, and extinguished the match between thumb and finger.

The Indian was a tall, thin old man, with black hair streaked with gray; and, in spite of the fact that he was nearly naked, the scout had recognized him instantly.

"Old Wanderoo!" he said, in amazement.

The Pawnee prophet threw himself about, as if in a boiling rage.

"Take et quiet, old hoss," Nomad advised. "You're jest wastin' yer stren'th fer nothin'."

"We'll get farther back with him," said the scout. "I want to talk with him."

"Waal, you'll shore be enj'vin' a conversation with a wild man ef ye do," Nomad declared.

They took the old medicine man nearly a mile from the camp, then stuck a revolver in his face as they stripped the gag out of his mouth.

Wanderoo, at first inclined to try to fight, calmed down when the flashing match light showed him the cold muzzle of the pistol under his nose. At the same time he saw and recognized Buffalo Bill.

He dropped back, panting, as the match went out. He was breathing heavily and his whole body seemed trembling.

"I think you know who I am, Wanderoo," said the scout in a kindly and conciliatory voice, speaking in Pawnee; "and remember, we do not intend to harm you."

Even then the prophet did not speak.

"You came from the Pawnee village," said the scout, "and you were running like a mad buffalo. Some shots have been heard to-night—fired, perhaps, by your warriors. Does that help you?"

Wanderoo sat up, still trembling. The cords were still on his arms and legs.

"You did not see it?" he asked, his tone a whisper.

"We saw nothing, but we heard you. I wonder you were not heard in the village, you made such a noise. Still, you were not running after anything."

"I was running away from it," confessed the medicine man.

"Waugh! Come erg'in," sputtered Nomad.

"Running away from what?" demanded the scout.

Wanderoo sat up still straighter.

"Am I mad?" he asked.

"A while ago you acted like a man crazy," the scout informed him.

"You are Pa-e-has-ka?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. And these are your warriors?"

"Yes."

"You know me—I am Wanderoo, the big medicine of the Pawnees. I speak with the spirits, I change the fountain of water into a fountain of fire, I work wonders, and all the Pawnees obey me."

"I have heard all that," said the scout.

"Yet, until to-night"—his voice shivered again—"not until to-night did I ever see an Indian devil."

He stared round as if he expected the terrible thing to start up out of the grass and jump at him.

"Tell us about it," said the scout gravely.

"You have seen an Indian devil?"

"Never."

"You have seen white devils?"

"Plenty of them," said the scout, smiling in the darkness. Wanderoo looked fearfully round again.

"Pa-e-has-ka, when your rope caught me and you jumped at me, I thought it was the Indian devil I had seen, grown suddenly large, and I fought with all my might."

"I will agree with you; you fought as if you were an Indian devil yourself. You fought like a maniac."

"I was in my medicine lodge, Pa-e-has-ka. And the devil came to me there. It was like a little man, no more than the height of a man's knee; it had a brown face like that of an Indian, but the face was covered with hair; and it had a long tail. And it wore strange clothing, with a plume."

"It came to the door of the medicine lodge on top of a red box which walked on one leg. I was mixing medicine in the little kettle of brass, and a fire was under the kettle—a small fire. So I saw it by the light of the fire. All outside was darkness, and it came out of the darkness."

"When I heard it and went to the door, it shook a chain, squeaked like a rat that has been caught in a trap, and leaped at my face; then it began to claw me."

"I fell back. The brass kettle went over into the fire, and the fire went out. I could not scream for help, for a hard lump was in my throat and choked me; but I ran out of the medicine lodge."

"I tried to run silently, and I ran away from the village to draw the devil out of it. Then your noose caught me, and—"

He stopped, panting and shivering.

"Waugh!" Nomad was gulping. "Waugh-h! Waugh-h!"

"Idt iss a kveer sdory," said the baron, who had got some of it.

Jones, still in the dark, piped up, when the voice of the scared medicine man had ceased:

"What's he been saying, anyhow, Cody?"

Buffalo Bill translated it briefly for the benefit of the professor while the medicine man was getting his breath back.

The scout now began to ask questions. But he knew what the Indian devil was.

"It is the monkey," he said to Nomad.

"And ther red box war ther hand organ!"

"You've got it."

"Waugh! Don't thet rattle ther ca'tridges in yer pistol! Ther dago nigger, what Jones, hyar says is Bob Dalton, is in ther Pawnee village."

"That is what I make of it."

"Gr-eat grasshoppers! Waal, he's shore got in thar ahead of us."

"It looks it."

"Et cain't be no other way, Buffler."

"And it looks as if he had gone to the medicine lodge for some purpose, and there encountered the medicine man. He kept down and pushed the hand organ and the monkey in to frighten Wanderoo; and Wanderoo didn't see him, he was so scared."

"You're hittin' et, Buffler."

Archibald Stepson Jones flounced suddenly like a speared fish.

"Say!" he cried, pulling at the scout's sleeve. "He went there to find that emerald cache!"

"Probably you're right, Jones."

"Don't I know it?"

The little man squirmed with excitement.

"Cody," he said, "you're trying to get into the village to help Pawnee Bill. If you do go in, let me go with you. I'd like to hold Bob Dalton up in that medicine lodge at the point of a pistol and—"

He subsided and dropped back.

"Pardon the exuberance of my imagination," he wheezed. "Of course I couldn't do it—hold up a man like Dalton. Still, I want to go with you."

Buffalo Bill began to cast up the chances.

"One man, in a try like that, is better than a dozen," he said. "And we've got Wanderoo to look out for. So I think I'll go on alone."

"Cody, if you do I'll desert and follow you," Jones threatened.

"And get yourself into trouble. Stay here with the others. If I am captured, you will have Wanderoo to offer in exchange for Pawnee and myself."

"Ve mighdt," suggested the German, "make dose offer an exchange vor Bawnee mitout you running some risks."

"We might, and I had thought of it. But it means delay, and delays are dangerous."

He questioned Wanderoo about the number of his warriors, the disposition of the guards, and the location of the prison lodge; and received, as he felt sure, only lies in return.

At last he stood up.

"I'm going," he said.

"Luck go with ye, Buffler."

"If by ten o'clock this morning you have heard nothing of me, send Little Cayuse to the edge of the village and let him shoot an arrow into it with a message saying you have Wanderoo and will exchange him for the white prisoners Pa-e-has-ka and Major Lillie. Say in the message that the prisoners are to be brought out to the edge of the hills, here—bound, if the Pawnees wish it so—and left on the ground here, when you will send Wanderoo forth."

"C'd they read et?" Nomad questioned.

"I'm believing that nothing of the kind will be needed," said the scout. "This is only an anchor to windward. Yes, some one there could read it—I could read it to them, or Lillie."

"Waugh! I hadn't thought er thet."

"So," added Buffalo Bill, with a smile, "even if Cayuse wrote the message himself, with chicken tracks drawn in charcoal for letters, I could read it—knowing what he meant to say, even if he hadn't said it."

He shook each by the hand, and included even Wanderoo; then he took his revolvers out and examined them, tightened his belt, and slipped away through the silence and darkness.

An hour before dawn the daring scout returned.

"I couldn't get in without too great risk," he confessed.

"The noise Wanderoo made in his crazy flight has, I think, convinced the Pawnees that troopers are near; so the guards have been doubled round the village, and are as wakeful as watchdogs."

"Ye didn't hear nothin' o' Pawnee?" Nomad asked anxiously.

"No, but I'm sure he is still safe. He has friends among the Pawnees, we know that."

He turned to Wanderoo.

"I think," he said to Nomad, "that the man with the monkey got in while the Pawnees were not so watchful. If not, he's clever."

"Bob Dalton," said Jones, "is as clever as they make 'em."

The scout roused Wanderoo and asked him again about the white prisoner, Pawnee Bill.

"Major Lillie is safe," said Wanderoo; "the Pawnees have him. They will not kill him unless you kill me; then he is sure to die."

"Cheer up, ye old faker," said Nomad. "We ain't goin' ter hurt ye none whatever."

"We'll lie out here through the day and watch the village," said the scout. "Incidentally, perhaps we can locate our animals. To-morrow night, after the Pawnees have been convinced that troopers are not out here threatening them, I'll have a better chance, as they will not be so watchful."

"If I fail to-morrow night, I shall simply take old Wanderoo up to the edge of the village, put a pistol to his head, and force him to order the release of Lillie. That would be taking desperate risks, but I'm going to do it if I see no other way."

"Buffler," said Nomad, "put us in the grass, backin' ye with our rifles, and thar would shore be dead Pawnees laying thick round thar ef they tried to jump ye."

CHAPTER XII.

PAWNEE BILL'S EXPLOIT.

On the second night of his imprisonment, the excitement in the village favoring him, Pawnee Bill succeeded in loosening the stakes holding the rear wall of the prison lodge to the ground and worked his way out without discovery.

Lying in the darkness, he heard the guards talking before the lodge. On the slope between them and the medicine lodge a fire was blazing, and round it half the village was gathered, watching the medicine lodge in anticipation of further strange happenings.

The light of the fire brightened the front of the medicine lodge and the door, which was now closed. But through some unchinked crannies the flash of a flame could be seen, and the Pawnees believed that the fire was again spouting in the fountain.

They watched, and surmised in excited gutturals; but they feared to go near to investigate.

Pawnee Bill took in the situation quickly.

"If the owner of the monkey is in there, with the door locked or barred, I don't see how I'm to get at him. But if Buffalo Bill is in there—"

Snakelike, he slid off to the right.

Getting behind a lodge and using it as a screen, he looked down at the medicine lodge and considered the situation.

"A desire to save my hide from punctures advises me to get out of here now as fast as I can. Still, I'm fool enough not to do it until I've had a look-in at that medicine lodge."

He squirmed on until he had gained the screen of another lodge.

Making his way silently from lodge to lodge, he drew farther off from the Indians. By the time he had reached the bottom of the slope, he had half circled the medicine lodge, and had it between him and the Indians, and was also well sheltered by the darkness down by the stream.

Creeping closer up to the medicine lodge, he came to the overflow pool, if it may be called that.

The medicine lodge has been described, but a recapitulation of some of its features may be desirable. It inclosed the fountain that seemed able to change from water to fire, and it had a wing which inclosed a poollike place

that was sometimes dry and sometimes was filled with water. This flowed out on the side nearest the river and ran into the river. When it was not flowing, of course the aperture for the water was empty.

Pawnee Bill had come up by the wing of the structure, and, being down on his hands and knees, he was on a level with the place through which the subsidiary fountain discharged. There was no water in it. As he poked along the wall he caught the glow of a fire.

Stopping to investigate, he discovered the aperture, and, thrusting his head into it, he saw that the fire came from the interior or beyond.

"Deserted Jericho!" he breathed. "Here is a hole big enough for me to crawl through, maybe, and—yes, I'll try it! There is no use trying that front door, watched by the Pawnees on the slope."

He found the hole a tight squeeze for his broad shoulders, and there were times when he thought he should stick fast; but he kicked and squirmed through and found himself in a little house covering what seemed to be a dry fountain.

The light came from a hole in the other house—the medicine lodge; and he moved toward it, still crawling, and found that he was crawling along a ditch that not long before had been filled with water. It was muddy.

"I'll be a sight," he thought; "but what's the odds if I get out with a whole skin?"

Fortunately the building screened him from the sight of the Pawnees; yet it is to be doubted if they could have seen him in the ditch if there had been no walls to hide him.

The hole in the wall of the medicine lodge, close to the ground for the overflow of the fountain when its water was turned into that channel, was no larger than the hole he had squirmed through before; but it was wet, and Pawnee's plastered condition made him now as slippery as an eel.

Still he was even more careful than he had been before, for he did not know what dangers lay ahead of him.

"This is queer," he reflected, as he lay in the hole listening while he regained his breath; "that fountain of water is bubbling away, or my ears are fooling me, and at the same time the fire is flashing; so it looks as though the fire and the water are going at the same time. But that is a fool guess, for the water would put out the fire, of course; unless it is, as the Indians believe, a supernatural fire, and I don't take any stock in that nonsense."

Pawnee heard a queer thudding, whose character he could not determine.

"Into the cave of mysteries," he said. "If I were a Pawnee Indian instead of Pawnee Bill, about now I'd be shivering in my moccasins and ready to crawfish. I'll admit that I'm wishing that I had some sort of weapon; but I haven't. So here goes; we'll see what's in there, or know why."

When he reached the inner side of the hole and looked through, he discovered that the flashing of fire came from a gasoline torch set on a shelf of stone and that the fountain of water was spouting and discharging its water into the stream below through a hole in another part of the wall.

But the discovery that made him stare was that a man was on the ground—an Indian, to judge by his appearance—with a pick lying beside him. At the moment he was clawing at some earth he had lifted with the pick and poking with his fingers into a hole he had excavated.

The floor of the medicine lodge had been torn up—it was earthen—and holes and mounds of earth showed everywhere.

The room was hung round with skins of animals, some with the mounted heads attached; and other skins that had apparently carpeted the floor were piled in a jumbled heap. Close by the fountain was another gasoline torch, unlighted, and of a large size; and in a niche in the farther wall was a big can labeled "Gasoline." In addition there were weapons on the walls and scattered round—Indian lances, hatchets, knives, revolvers, and rifles—enough to fit out a small company of men.

"Old Wanderoo was prepared for fighting and a siege," thought Pawnee. "But who is this scraping at that hole? Can it be Wanderoo? It must be."

Suddenly he heard the chattering of the monkey, and

off at one side he saw the hand organ, half covered with a skin that had been carelessly tossed on it. There sat the monkey, chattering and squealing, chained to the organ.

Pawnee opened his eyes in surprise when the "Indian" looked up and flung a round English oath at the monkey.

The "Indian" was a white man, and he was not Buffalo Bill.

"Tarantulus and tailless cats! It's the owner of the monkey, painted red as an Indian. Well, if he sees me here he has got guns enough round him to shoot me up a whole lot. I see where I get if—if my luck goes back on me."

Nevertheless, studying the situation, Pawnee decided to try for the man's capture.

The latter was engrossed in his work—he did not fear that the Indians would trouble him, and he supposed his other foes were far away. As Pawnee surmised, he was searching for the cache of emeralds, which a study of the situation had led him to believe lay in the floor of the medicine lodge. He had found a pick in the lodge, used by the Pawnees when they built the lodge for old Wanderoo, and he had used it on the floor ruthlessly.

Having scraped to the bottom of the hole he had excavated and found nothing, he attacked it again with the pick. His blows were vigorous, the dirt flew, and his back was turned to Pawnee Bill.

Pawnee crawled through the hole quickly and rose by the wall. No weapon was within reach of his hand. The monkey chattered and bounced on the hand organ, seeing Pawnee; but the man did not understand it as a warning.

The next instant Pawnee Bill had flung himself across the intervening space, and the man went down under him, crumpling over his pick, and Pawnee's fingers of steel were tightening round his throat.

The struggle was sharp, but it was short. Pawnee had the advantage, and he held it; his mud-slippery clothing gave the man no handhold; and soon, choked senseless, he ceased to struggle.

The monkey was bouncing and squealing in fright when Pawnee rose, and, hooking a rope from the wall, began to tie his prisoner.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MYSTERY UNCOVERED.

"By the great O-zu-ha!"

Pawnee Bill whirled round, thinking to meet a new danger.

A man had crawled through the hole by which he had himself gained entrance.

But the man was Buffalo Bill.

For a moment the pards stood staring at each other.

"Necarnis!" said Pawnee.

"Pard Lillie! But," he added, "you don't look it."

"Nor you!"

Buffalo Bill laughed and flung a glance round him—at the floor and the walls, at the chattering monkey, and at the man bound on the floor, who was painted red as a warpath Indian.

"Explanations are in order, Lillie."

"Also unt likewise vrom you, as the baron would say."

"You have captured Bob Dalton—if he is Bob Dalton. You found him in here?"

"While hunting for you, necarnis."

Hastily Pawnee Bill began to string his story lariat. He was not long about it, and Buffalo Bill was in possession of the essential facts.

"I came to pull you out of your trouble—and to get him," said Buffalo Bill. "I tried to get here last night, but couldn't. To-night I got through the Pawnee lines; crawled round and found this place, with the way to get in—the back door, you may say. So I came in, and you were finishing your job of tying up that fellow."

He looked at the fountain and at the sputtering torch of gasoline.

"This clears up a whole lot," said Pawnee. "Having penetrated to the lodge of the great Pawnee wonder worker, we find, like most of his kind, that he is a fraud of the first water."

"Yes, I see; yet I don't see clearly."

"Ordinarily that fountain," said Pawnee, "rises just as we see it now, and flows out to the river through that

hole over there. But when the Pawnee prophet wants to shut it off he puts a board over it, shoots it down to the floor, and it flows through that other hole which we came through, and goes to the river by the other channel through that wing of the lodge. The Indians are not permitted to come close to investigate; and they believe, then, that the Pawnee wizard has made the fountain stop flowing. Then all he has to do is to light that big gasoline torch, set it flaming on top of the board so that the fire will rise from the spot where the fountain had been spouting, and the miracle is accomplished.

"I studied that out," he added, with a laugh, "while I was tying up this rascal."

"You don't know who he is?"

"I'm guessing he is the negro owner of the monkey."

"Alias Bob Dalton, the desperado, Jones declares—a white man who has committed so many crimes that if he should be hanged for each of them the neck stretching would go on for a year."

He looked round again.

"You didn't see anything of that wonderful stone which Wanderoo is said to throw his enemies against, where they died like flies?" he asked.

"No; and I don't believe there is such a thing."

Catching up a gourd from the pick-heaved floor, Buffalo Bill dipped it full of water from the fountain.

"This will do to get the paint off with, though a little soap would help. We'll see who he is."

The application of the cold water brought the prisoner back to consciousness by the time the paint was scrubbed from his hands and face. If there had been black coloring matter under it, that went, too; and he was revealed as a white man—as Bob Dalton, the desperado.

"Jones was right," said Buffalo Bill. "I know this scoundrel, and it will be a pleasure to take him back to the officers who have been wanting so long to get their hands on him. I wonder if Jones was right also about the emeralds?"

"I don't think, if there is a cache," said Pawnee, "that it can be in this spot; for this fellow has dug up about every foot of the floor and found nothing, as you can see."

The great scout went over to the hand organ and the monkey. The monkey tried to bite him, and he slashed the leather collar round its neck and let it go.

Deserting its master, it leaped into the hole leading to the other room and disappeared.

"The Indians will get another scare from the Indian devil," said the scout; and he told of the fright and flight of old Wanderoo.

"We've got several hours of darkness still ahead of us," he said; "so I'm going to look at the 'works' of this hand organ."

"There is a mystery connected with that, too, eh?"

"Perhaps so—perhaps not."

Yells reached them from the village.

"The monkey is running amuck," said Pawnee.

He laughed.

"And the Pawnees are running, too," said the scout. "It would be worth looking at if we had time for it and cared to take the risk. But right now I'm interested in this hand organ."

Dalton, staring-eyed, watched him from the floor, where he lay helplessly bound.

"I'd advise you to let that alone," he grumbled.

"Dynamite in it, eh?"

"You jest let it alone."

"Sorry to disoblige you, Dalton," said the scout; "but if it blows me up you'll go, too, I suppose."

"And your friend with you. There is an explosive in it, and it will blow this medicine lodge higher than a kite."

"Let her blow," said the scout serenely.

At one side of the organ was a catch, and this enabled the scout to open it.

"You'll observe, Pawnee," he said, "that this is a large hand organ—extra large, I should call it—which has made me believe it must have something more inside than the organ part of it. Ah! I thought so!"

At the bottom of the big reddish-colored box was found an ingenious miniature Gatling gun, or a revolver with a Gatling cartridge feed, and a number of .38-caliber cartridges.

When the handle of the organ was taken off, the muzzle

of this queer firearm could be lifted and projected from the handle aperture, and from it a veritable hail of bullets could be sent.

"I think I'd like to have this gun," said the scout.

Proceeding with his investigations, he found in addition a little box that held paints and pigments, together with disguises of one sort and another such as only a desperado who was also a good actor would desire to use.

One of the articles found in the box was a bottle of black coloring matter.

The scout took it out and looked at it by the light of the torch.

"I think this is where our friend Dalton got his Ethiopian complexion," he remarked. "It must be good stuff, for that negro color stood the test of a mighty close inspection."

He looked closely at Dalton.

"The shape of your face helped you out in that," he said. "I shouldn't be surprised if you have negro blood."

Buffalo Bill's desire to retain possession of the wonderful little repeating gun inclosed in an apparently innocent hand organ was baffled, for it was entirely too large to be taken through the holes in the wall; and, as the Indians were returning to their stations on the slope, to try to get out with it boldly, and with their prisoner, by way of the door, had too dangerous a look to tempt him.

So the hand organ with its inclosed shooting mechanism was left in the medicine lodge of necessity. And the monkey had disappeared.

But Bob Dalton went along, snaked through the holes in the walls, bound and with a gag in his mouth.

The scouts made a neat get-away by the river route; and, keeping in the high grass, they succeeded, before morning dawned, in reaching the rendezvous out in the edge of the hills.

Wanderoo was still there, close-herded by the other members of the scout's party and by Jones.

The latter bounced with delight when he beheld the prisoner, and began at once to inquire about the emerald cache.

"The emeralds will have to go this time, Jones," said the scout, "unless you want to try for them yourself; and in the present temper of the Pawnees I'd advise you not to do that. You'd get nothing and you might lose your scalp."

He turned to Wanderoo.

"We captured you fairly; and by all the rules of war we are entitled to hold you. But we will release you, on one condition: Promise me, Pa-e-has-ka, that you will bury the hatchet, set the fountain of fire to burning no more, and walk in the white man's path of peace."

Old Wanderoo gave his solemn promise.

A little later he was sliding through the grass on his way to the Pawnee village.

Little Cayuse had located Chick-Chick and the other animals—they were bunched near the Pawnee pony herd. By a daring raid he and Nomad had secured them, and now they were brought up.

So that before old Wanderoo was out of sight Buffalo Bill and his companions were on their way with their prisoner to Pagoda Springs.

Bob Dalton, in spite of his fallen fortunes, was proud of his exploit, and he spoke about it en route:

"I wanted to get at that emerald cache, and I wanted to get away from officers who were chasing me; so it was me for the Pawnee country, where I didn't think any white man would follow."

"Once I had seen Indians scared batty by a monkey; so I built my plan round that idea. Also, the gun I had bought had been set in a hand organ. I got it of a dago who belonged to the Camorra—you know about that Italian society of thieves and assassins. Well, it was a beaut; I wouldn't have lost it even for the emeralds. It cost me a lot of good money. You see, I didn't know but I'd have to fight the whole Pawnee tribe; I c'd 'a' done it with that gun."

"But I didn't need to fight. With an Indian blanket round me, and feathers in my hair, and Indian paint on my face, I got up by the door of the medicine lodge from the thick grass that was behind the lodge. The Pawnees must have seen me and thought I was one of 'em, I s'pose

—they couldn't see me well; and I had the blanket over the organ and the monkey.

"The door stood open, and old Wanderoo was inside, croonin' to a brass kittle, when he heard me. Thinkin' I was a Pawnee, he was red-hot as a hornet soon's he seen me, and came a-jumpin'. But when I pulled away the blanket and he saw the monkey—well, the change that went over the spirit of his dreams was a thing you read about. He nigh fainted when the monkey clawed him, and jumped past me with his knees wabblin' and his eyes poppin' out of his head. He near fell in the grass; then pawed along, too scared to get up, and hit the high grass back by the river and floated away.

"I dropped down under the blanket and slid into the house, the Pawnees not knowin' what was happenin', for Wanderoo was too scared to yell out to 'em. And I left the monkey on the organ by the door to keep him scared if he came back, and frighten them if they poked down there to investigate. The monkey, after daylight come, had 'em goin' so that they was fair bughouse.

"I was burrowin' like a badger long before that; but when I seen it I knew they wouldn't bother me none; so I pulled him in, and they sure kept away, thinkin' the devil had gone inside the medicine house. And then I got to work again."

"But you didn't find the emeralds?" said Jones.

"No," he said in disgust; "and you'll never find 'em if you should dig there a month, for they ain't there; and I begin to think now that letter you had was a fake, jest like you aire!"

Archibald Stepson Jones swung his game eye round and chuckled audibly.

"Sometimes," he said, "when a man is huntin' for one thing he finds somethin' else."

"Which means that you got me? Well, I allus thought you was one of them officers that was chasin' me; and now I'm sure of it."

"Whoosh!" said Jones, boring him with that jerking optic. "Don't try to take the credit from Bill Cody."

"The thing of gettin' into that medicine lodge," said Dalton, when he had recovered his equanimity, "was so simple and dead easy that I have to laugh. If I'd wanted to, I c'd have chased that whole village of redskins by chargin' 'em with the monkey perched on my shoulder. 'Twould have been fun to see 'em runnin'!"

But he did not laugh when he thought of what probably lay in store for him in Pagoda Springs, at the end of the trail.

THE END.

If you love a thrilling story of the warfare between the Indians and the "pony soldiers," with the great scouts taking a leading part, you must not miss the story in the next issue: "Buffalo Bill and Old Wanderoo; or, Pawnee Bill and the Pawnees." The Indians, roused to the highest pitch of fanatical savagery, go on the warpath and create a reign of terror among the ranchers. Uncle Sam's troopers are summoned to the scene of action, and arrive just in time to unite with the Bills and their pards in the rescue of some unfortunate whites from torture and imminent death. No. 279. Out January 12th.

ANOTHER FRIENDSHIP BROKEN.

This is the reason the artist and his former friend do not speak any more. The artist got a local dealer to exhibit his paintings, and after a few days he took his bosom friend down to see the exhibition.

The friend looked the pictures over—critically, skeptically. Then he said:

"I see that big painting has a tag on it, saying: 'Sold.'"

"Yes," answered the artist. "Mr. Gillson bought that picture."

"Gillson did? Honest? Well, there's a big mistake here."

"What do you mean?"

"The dealer ought not to have hung that 'Sold' tag on the picture. He should have hung it on Gillson."

THE RIVAL MINERS;

Or, Ted Strong on the Trail.

By EDWARD C. TAYLOR.

(This interesting story began in NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY No. 269. If you have not read the preceding chapters, get the back numbers which you have missed from your news dealer. If he cannot supply you with them the publishers will do so.)

CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued).

"Curse it," he muttered; "he's escaped the rush with his usual luck. He won't escape me now."

Earl had been drinking a good deal that day. He was highly excited, and was burning with rage against Ted Strong. Before he knew what he was doing, his hand had slipped around to the revolver at his belt.

"He bullied me to-day!" he hissed. "He backed me down and let me see his hand lying on the butt of his gun as a sort of a threat that he would shoot. We'll see who'll shoot now. We'll see."

Before he had time to think, his revolver was out and leveled. Then came the flash and the crack. Rossiter saw the arms of his enemy, black bars against the moonlight, fly up suddenly into the air like the arms of a child's toy when the string is pulled. He saw the firm, graceful figure suddenly grow limp, like a wet rag, and reel and sway in the saddle. The next instant Ted Strong was lying, stunned, on the ground, a bullet through his shoulder, and his frightened horse had leaped away madly, almost running down Earl Rossiter in his flight.

Now that he had fired the shot, Earl was frightened at what he had done. Before the shot he had been flushed and burning. Now he shivered. He felt cold and sick and frightened.

"I wonder if I have killed him," he muttered, as he stepped forward toward the prostrate form. "I hope not, but I don't know."

He approached Ted Strong still closer, shaking from head to foot, in a cold sweat. The young leader lay as he had fallen, half on his side, half on his back. There was a dark stain on the khaki coat, at the shoulder, and his face looked ghostlike in the moonlight.

Frightened and trembling, Rossiter stood and regarded his fallen enemy. He had fought Ted for a long time and tried many mean tricks, but deliberate murder was a terrible thing—too terrible to think of!

"I don't know," he muttered. "I hate to touch him. He's dead, I think. Dead! It must never be discovered. He can be taken away from here. But I will order some of the men to do it. I can't bear to think of it. I can't bear to look at him."

He stepped backward, step by step, keeping his face turned toward the prostrate figure. He was afraid to turn his back to it, he knew not why. He felt that he must keep his eyes on it as he backed away. Then at last, by a strong effort of the will, he turned around and walked over toward the house. Hendricks was there, so were several of the vaqueros.

"Here," said Hendricks, "are you ready? I am waiting to start. The two horses are around behind, all saddled up—hello! what makes you look so pale—what makes you tremble so? You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"Nothing's the matter with me," Rossiter answered. "I guess those young range riders are out of the way for the present. But there is no time to lose. We can't get out of here too quick."

Earl had not the courage to speak of what he had done. Besides that, he had an instinctive feeling that Hendricks was not a good man to confide a secret of that kind to. He meant to allow Ted's body to be discovered by the vaqueros in the morning, and then to profess utter ignorance as to how it came there. Some of the stray cattle would have run over it by that time and trampled it out of shape. Earl shuddered so that Hendricks looked at him wonderingly.

"Come on," said Earl. "Get on your horse."

He flung himself into the saddle and turned to his vaqueros.

"If any one comes to-morrow," he said, "tell him that I am gone on a little hunting trip. Say you don't know where. I don't care whether they find out or not." Then he added to himself: "By that time Hendricks will be safe aboard a railroad train, and it will be too late."

Hendricks was slowly mounting his horse, holding it in with difficulty. Earl spoke to him irritably and urged him to hurry. Then the vaqueros saw the two of them riding off in the rays of the setting moon.

For a mile or so they rode along in silence. Then the road began to get rougher and wind in and out, making stony buttes and gulches, through which the torrents poured through from the hills in the rainy season. Earl took the lead at this point, telling his companion to follow him, and for another mile or so the two wound on up a scarce distinguishable trail. The ground rose higher and higher before them.

It grew colder and darker. The moon had set, and they were getting into a higher altitude. Scrubby pine trees grew down close about the path now, and forests, dark and mysterious, hung above them, darkening the higher slopes of the mountains like a pall.

Hendricks had noticed the strange silence and pallor of his companion, and could not fathom it. He knew that his friend had been drinking a great deal that day, but he had seen him drunk before, and he had never acted this way.

"What's the matter, Earl?" he asked. "Don't you feel well?"

"I am all right," said Earl. "Get a move on you. We want to get out of this cursed valley. We want freer air than this. I am smothered down here. I hate the plains. It is the mountain tips that I want."

Hendricks spoke no more, and they pressed on in silence. The fugitive from justice was strangely ill at ease. He knew that he had successfully eluded the Ted Strong party, but his present situation did not seem to be very much better than the former one. His only companion was a man whom he had always feared and failed to understand. Now he could understand him less than ever. Rossiter's pale visage and wildly staring eyes, his taciturnity and stern tone when he did speak, terrified him. Could it be that he was going crazy? He was alone with him on this wild mountain side.

Hendricks glanced about him and thought that never had he seen a more depressing or terrifying view. They had he seen a more depressing or terrifying view. They were in the pine woods now, and dark boughs hung low over their heads. The track before them was winding and so steep that the horses could not move at anything faster than a walk. When there was a vista in the trees, Hendricks could catch vaguely in the darkness the notion of a vast expanse of rock and forest, a steep mountainside, full of shadowy terrors. What if Rossiter should attack him? He knew that Earl was stronger than he was, and the two were alone together. He felt in the bosom of his blouse, where he had concealed a little derringer pistol, a double-barreled antique weapon, not a revolver, that he had picked up that day in the Sunset ranch house. Rossiter turned his head sharply.

"Looking for your gun?" he asked. "You have no need of a weapon here. There is no danger here."

Hendricks was frightened, but tried to appear at his ease.

"I was just looking for a handkerchief," he said, with a forced laugh, "but if I didn't know you, I would think there was danger. You look fierce enough to kill a fellow."

"Kill a fellow!" Earl reined back his horse and almost yelled out the words.

Hendricks edged away from him so far as the narrow road would permit.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Rossiter, in a queer voice.

"I—I was only joking," said Hendricks. "What's the matter?"

Earl slowly recovered his composure.

"I didn't catch what you said," he remarked. "I heard you say something about killing. I don't like talk of that

kind. When you want to make jokes, make them on other subjects."

"Of course," said Hendricks. "I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to startle you. I didn't mean to make you jump like that."

"I didn't jump," said Earl. "There is nothing the matter with me. Come on."

On and on they went, higher and higher, over the ridges of the mountains. It grew colder and colder. The trees were more sparse and scrubbier now. They had passed through the timber belt and were now coming out on the higher ridges of the mountain, where it was bare and cold, and where the wind, sweeping down from the northward, pierced them to the very bone.

Hendricks shivered and drew his coat close about him. That night, so far, they must have ridden a good twenty miles, but Rossiter was still moving ahead steadily, looking neither to the left nor right, and keeping his horse at a slow trot.

Hendricks began to wonder if his companion had lost the way and was trying to find it again. His weariness was great. He felt that he could lie forward and fall asleep on the pommel of his saddle in spite of the motion of his horse. The cold was trying him terribly. His limbs seemed to be asleep, and felt like lumps of ice. His hands were so numb that they could scarcely hold the bridle rein.

"Haven't we gone about far enough, Earl?" he asked. "Isn't this about far enough for one night's trip? We must have come a good distance. I am about ready to drop off my horse now."

"I'm not ready to stop yet," said Earl, pulling up his horse and allowing the other to come close up alongside of him. "We will go about three miles farther. I have been through here before now, you know, on hunting trips. We are just crossing the crest of this range, and we have crossed it by a pass that everybody doesn't know about, either."

"If you look on either side of you, you will see that this is the only place where the mountains can be crossed by anything short of a goat. We will camp about a mile farther down, in a place I know, and where I have camped before. That is only one day's journey to a railroad station in Montana, and, once on the train, we will have no more difficulty."

Hendricks noticed that his companion seemed a good deal more quiet and composed now, and his fears were allayed. He concluded that Earl had got over the effects of the liquor he had drunk that day, and that he was himself again. As a matter of fact, Earl had got over his first thought of horror at having killed Ted Strong, and was beginning to accustom himself to the idea.

"I'm about dead," said Hendricks. "I don't believe I can go another mile."

Earl looked at his companion with an expression of great disgust. Endowed by nature with splendid health and constitution, he had contempt, rather than pity, for those weaker than himself.

"You'll have to keep up," he said. "There isn't any other way out of it for you. Just brace up and be a man for once in your life. Show what's in you."

"I am nearly dead," said Hendricks. "I'd give anything in the world for a drink of whisky."

Earl drew a silver-mounted flask from his pocket and handed it over. The other seized it and drank greedily. Then he glanced about him. He saw that what Earl had said about their being in a pass through the mountains was true. On either side of him towered lofty peaks, their summits shrouded in snow.

"I feel a little better now, thanks," he said. "I guess I can make it."

"You could make it without any trouble at all if you didn't act like a sick baby, with your whining and fainting," said Earl. "You make me tired. You are not worth saving, but I suppose I will have to see you through now, anyway. Come on!"

He shook the reins loose over the neck of his horse again, and the two started off once more. They had reached the highest point of the pass now, and presently they began to go down. Earl knew that path well, and picked his way with wonderful sureness and safety among the rocks. Hendricks was too played out and weak to

do anything much but cling to the back of his animal, but the instinct of the horse told it to follow directly in the footsteps of the preceding animal.

It was a gentle descent, for a time, and then it became more precipitous. Ted gave his horse loose rein, going down the rocky path in the darkness at a perilous rate, and Hendricks, unable to control his own animal, followed blindly, expecting to be dashed to pieces at any minute.

Presently the path became wider and the descent less steep. The horses broke into an easy run. It was so dark that Hendricks could see little about him. He knew that he was passing under trees and over a slight rise in the trail, and then he heard the ripple and saw the waters of a little lake that lay hidden in the mountains. Earl Rossiter checked his horse.

"Here we are," he said. "You can get off here. I am going to stay here all day. It's pretty near morning now, and we both need a good rest."

Hendricks tumbled off his horse to the ground. He was about played out, and he silently watched Rossiter as he staked the two horses out to graze and removed their saddles and spread the folded-up horse blankets that did service as saddle cloths over their backs. A few minutes later both men were stretched out on the ground, wrapped in the blankets which they had carried with them, and falling asleep.

Hendricks slept well—the sleep of utter weariness that knows no dreams. But with Rossiter it was different. He stirred and moved uneasily, muttering under his breath. Once he cried aloud, such a terrifying shriek that it awakened his companion who lay by his side.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOT ON THE TRAIL.

When Ted Strong came to himself again, he was lying on the ground and some one was holding his head. The moon was setting, but there was still a pale light, in which it was possible to see things with tolerable distinctness. He felt strangely weak and dizzy, and there was an odd, numb feeling in his left arm near the shoulder.

His whole arm was wet, too—wet and cold. He looked up weakly and saw Kit Summers looking down at him with an anxious, strained face.

For a moment there seemed nothing remarkable in the fact that Kit was there and that he was lying, helpless, in his arms. Then his mind began to work more clearly. He remembered the events of the evening and all that had happened. He remembered that he had been looking for Kit and wondering where he was when he had been fired at. He knew now that his arm was wet and cold, because it was drenched with his own blood, and that some one had fired at him from the darkness.

"Hello, Kit," he said, sitting up suddenly. "I am all right. That tumble from my horse stunned me, but I am all right. You escaped the stampede all right, didn't you? I was looking for you when some one shot at me." He moved his arm up and down slowly. "They shot me through the arm, but it's only a flesh wound. There is nothing the matter with me."

"Are you sure there is not?" said Kit.

Ted laughed his ringing, merry laugh that Kit knew so well, and rose to his feet.

"I've lost a little blood," he said, "but not enough to do me any harm. That bullet went right through my arm, I guess. Pull off my jacket, will you? In the pocket you will find some surgical gauze. Wrap it around the cut and bandage it up tight. And tell me how you escaped that rush of cattle when they came past. Here, don't take off that coat. I might have trouble getting it on again, and it is quite chilly to-night. Just slit down the sleeve with your bowie knife. We can easily sew it up again. Bud Morgan has needle and thread in his saddlebags."

Kit set to work immediately. He slit down the sleeve of the khaki jacket and the shirt underneath it. The bullet had not gone through the arm, but had grazed it. Ted laughed.

"Not very much to make a fuss over," he said. "It's little more than a scratch. It took me by surprise, though. I thought the fellow that fired at me was you, and I was so taken back when the shot came that I reeled

in the saddle. Then I hit the ground so hard that I didn't know anything more for a little while. How did you come here?"

Kit was skillfully wrapping the soft gauze around Ted's hard, muscular arm.

"I heard Bud Morgan sing out," said he, "and then I noticed that stampede heading for me. I started to run for the arroyo just as you called, but I saw that it was no use. So I cut off to one side, hoping that the cattle would head off in the other direction. They did, all right, as luck would have it. One steer struck me and knocked me down, and I lay where I was till the main body had slipped past. I thought it was the safest place, and it turned out that it was. As I was lying there, I heard a shot, and I suppose it was the one that hit you. I think it was Earl Rossiter who fired that shot."

"What makes you think that?" asked Ted, arranging the cut sleeve of his jacket as well as he could, and pinning it at the wrist.

"I saw Rossiter riding away from here a little while ago," said Kit. "Hendricks was with him. They were headed for the Big Smoky Mountains."

"What?" said Ted.

"Fact," said Kit. "I guess they are headed for the pass, and if we don't overtake him, we make a big mistake. Here come the other boys, and here is your horse. I caught it, and I found mine in the arroyo, safe and sound. Only the end of the stampede struck it, and the steers seem to have run around it."

There was a clatter of hoofs in their ears now, and the cowboys, turning, could see the rest of the young range riders coming at a gallop.

They had been caught in the tide of rushing cattle, and had been forced to go with it for several miles. In order to save themselves from being overrun at the very first, they had charged the cattle on the point of the herd, and then had been caught up in the whirling mass themselves. One by one, they had managed to extricate themselves from the press and ride out to the side of the herd. They were all anxious about the safety of Kit, whom they knew to be missing, and they set up a shrill cheer when they saw him standing, safe and sound, by the side of Ted Strong.

"Glad ter see yer, Kit," said Bud Morgan. "Jumpin' sand hills! I thort at first that ye was shore under ther herd. But we tackled them hard on ther flank and throwed them offen to one side a leetle. I guess as how it was a pretty good thing for you thet we did do thet."

"You bet it was," said Kit. "They were coming straight for me. And there wasn't the faintest chance in the world of my outrunning them and reaching the arroyo first."

"Them cows is a-runnin' yet," said Bud. "I allow as this here Sunset Ranch is a pretty goldurned slick sort of er place when they let their cows run off like thet in the middle of ther night. I didn't see none of ther vaqueros around, neither."

"Not a soul did we see," said Bud Morgan. "The cattle seemed to have run off for nothing at all. I can't understand it."

"I can understand it all right," said Kit. "I was here and saw the whole thing. That herd was stampeded on purpose. It was stampeded for the purpose of running over us and getting our attention away from that house for a while. Rossiter calculated that we would be so busy with the steers running over us that we wouldn't see what he was doing. That was his little plan, and I suppose he didn't care a rap if the whole lot of us were wiped off the face of the earth in the rush."

"He's a low-down, no account maverick, who ain't wuth shootin'," said Bud Morgan, "but by ther jumpin' sand hills, I think as how Kit is right, an' thet he worked thet trick jest that way. It's a case of lookin' up trails ag'in."

"I thought there might be something in the wind like that," said Ben Tremont, "but I knew that Ted and Kit here were still at the house, and I thought that they might take the same idea into their heads and keep a pretty close watch."

"What's the matter with your arm, Ted?" asked Bean Pole suddenly. "It's been bleeding and you look pale."

"I feel a little pale," said Ted, "but I am all right. I got a slight flesh wound in the arm."

"Didt von oof der pulls bite yourselluf as you vent past?" asked Carl.

The boys crowded around Ted and asked him what had happened. He told them in a few words, and then Kit told his experiences.

"While I was fooling around with Ted," he said, "just before he came to, I saw a couple of fellows ride off toward the mountains. I am certain that those two fellows were Hendricks and Rossiter. They are headed for the pass across the mountains into Montana—"

"And we are going to catch them before they reach Montana!" cried Ted, in a ringing voice. "Earl Rossiter planned that trick pretty well, but he hasn't beaten us yet, not by a long shot."

"Here is yer hoss, Ted," said Bud, who had disappeared a little while before. "I saw him cantering about in ther dark jest now, an' I roped him in."

At the same moment Kit Summers came up with his own animal, which he had found safe and sound in the arroyo. Ted looked around at his band and saw that they were all there. He swung himself into the saddle.

"Now, boys," he said, "we have a plain trail to follow for the hills. We follow it day and night till we catch the fugitives. Forward, march!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE END OF THE TRAIL.

It was well toward night when Hendricks awoke. He sat up and blinked about stupidly. His sleep had been dreamless. He did not recollect, at first, the events of the day and night before, and he had no very clear idea of where he was. He saw Rossiter's face, pale and drawn, staring into his, and his hand instinctively moved to the pocket in which he kept his money concealed. It was all right.

"Come, wake up," said Rossiter roughly. "You have had sleep enough for three men. Get on your legs and drink this hot coffee. I have been up and lit a fire and made it. Heaven knows I need it. I am so shaky I can hardly do anything. That booze last night, I guess, was a trifle too much for me. No more of it for me. I cut it out from this on. I've had enough of it. Get up and drink this coffee. Then we'll get started."

"The others," said Hendricks, beginning to remember things; "Ted Strong's men—have you any idea where they are?"

"I have a pretty good idea we have fooled them and left them behind," said Rossiter; "but I won't feel easy till we get across the border, into Montana."

"No more will I," said Hendricks. He tried to get on his feet, and succeeded after one or two efforts. But he was very stiff and sore. Unlike his companion, he was unused to outdoor life or hard physical strains of any kind. He had spent the greater part of his life indoors, in cities, and he was easily knocked out by any hardships. He staggered around, rubbing his limbs and groaning. Now that he was broad awake, he ached in every joint, and thousands of pins and needles darted through his flesh as his circulation, which the cold had diminished, began to get better and send warmer blood coursing through his half-frozen limbs.

"I can't move another step," he groaned. "I am played out. I am sore from riding, and I ache all over. I am just about ready to lie down and die."

Rossiter handed him over a tin cup of coffee. It held about a quart and was so hot that it burned his lips and tongue, but Hendricks drained it to the very dregs.

"Feel better, after that?" said Rossiter. "Now get on your horse."

Rossiter had the two steeds already saddled, and he turned over the bridle rein of the one that Hendricks rode. Hendricks made a feeble effort to get into the saddle; but fell backward with a cry of pain.

"I can't do it," he said. "This sort of thing is killing me. My legs are so sore and stiff I can't stretch them across the back of a horse. I wish I had never gone into this thing with you. It's awful. I wish I was dead."

Rossiter had been looking up the narrow trail that led

away between two high mountains, the pass over the crest of the range through which he had passed himself before daylight that morning. He suddenly gave a cry of alarm.

"Some one's coming," he said. "Men on horseback. Get on your horse."

Hendricks did not even look up. He leaned forward, resting his head on his saddle, and groaned.

"Let 'em come," he said. "I am ready to die. Let 'em arrest me. I don't care. I'd be happier in jail than here. Let me alone."

Rossiter was filled with a sudden rage.

"You'd be happier in jail than here," he cried; "you skulking, ferret-faced coward! You want to go to jail, do you? I suppose you do. You want to be tried, and then, at the trial, show what a coward you are by splitting on me. You think you can get free before the end of it all, by turning State's evidence and landing me in jail! You'll not go to jail. If you don't help to get away from the range riders, by Heaven I'll beat the head off you! I'll kill you before I let you fall into their hands, you coward. I've undertaken to get you out of here free and clear, and I am going to do it. I'm not going to let you stay behind."

Hendricks groaned, but did not stir.

"Get on that horse," said Rossiter, coming close to him, his face white as death and working with passion. Still Hendricks did not move. Rossiter drew back his fist and struck him in the face. Hendricks staggered back with a wild yell of fear.

"Don't kill me yet!" he begged. "Let me alone. Don't strike me again."

Rossiter struck him twice more, stinging blows with the flat of his hand.

"Now will you get on your horse?" he said. "Do you want to stay behind and be captured now?"

"No, no," said Hendricks, rushing for the side of his animal and scrambling on its back with a great effort. "I'll do anything you say, but please don't hit me."

Rossiter cast a glance back along the trail. The figures on horseback were plain enough now. The evening sun was shining on them. They were young men clad in khaki. Rossiter shivered. With one leap he landed in his own saddle, and then, grasping the bridle rein of his companion's horse, swung them both around.

"I'm not afraid," he muttered. "I am not afraid of any of those fellows. I have no reason to fear any one of them. Ted Strong was the only man I was afraid of. He's dead now. He can't hurt me."

At headlong speed he drove the two horses down the winding trail. Hendricks had no control whatever of his own animal. His companion was still grasping it by the bridle, and he himself was holding on with both hands to keep his seat. The jolting was terrible, and it seemed to him that he could not keep on much longer. But the fear of rolling off the back of the horse, to be trampled underfoot on the rocky mountain trail, made him hold on like grim death.

"These horses are in a bad way," said Rossiter. "They were driven too hard last night. They can't do much to-day. I can get away by myself, but your horse is about done, and I am thinking of getting you away—not myself. We can stand them off yet, though. Ted Strong is not with them, and they have no leader. We can stand them off. I am not going to ride away and leave you. Right ahead here there is a sort of basin with a narrow entrance."

"If we get in there we can hold them off easily. We can pick them off with our rifles, one by one, as they come up. They might have gone ahead and occupied it if they knew about it. There is a short cut to it, but none of them know about it. None of them, that is, except Ted Strong. He knows it's there, but he's not here now. None of the rest know about it, and that is what we will head for."

Through clouds of dust they clattered down the trail. Behind them came the noise of running steeds and the shouts of the pursuers. The young range riders were following them hard and fast. Rossiter could hear them cheering and calling at him to stop.

"Yell away!" he snarled. "You can't stop us now. Yell all you want to, you fools!"

There was a sputtering fire from behind, a sudden crackling of revolvers, and bullets bit into the dust all around the fugitives. At a word from Kit Summers, the pursuing cowboys had fired a volley, more with the intent of frightening the runaways into halting than of hitting them. But Rossiter was not to be frightened that way. He laughed at Hendricks, who ducked clumsily and drew his own weapon, sending three shots back over his shoulder without aiming or looking where he was shooting. They went wild, of course, but the pursuers could hear them rattling about the rocks above their heads. They cheered again, and that rousing cheer struck terror to the heart of Hendricks.

"Listen to 'em yell!" panted Rossiter. "Just listen to 'em. Ted Strong's out of the way, though. I'll never see him again. I am through with him. Here is the basin, right before us. We'll get into that, and then let's see them come any farther after us."

The trail divided at this point. One branch of it ran on, clear and straight, down the side of the mountain. The other ran slightly uphill for perhaps a hundred yards toward the basin which Earl had spoken of. The entrance could be plainly seen, flanked on either side by tall boulders, a narrow opening in the face of a cliff. Rossiter was turning the two steeds up the trail when a figure appeared in the very entrance of the place of refuge he had hoped to gain.

The sun was now setting and its rays bathed the trail in a mellow, yellow light, so that the mounted figure which had suddenly appeared was outlined in a golden glow that gave it the appearance of something more than human. It was the figure of a young man, brown-haired and steady-eyed, clad in khaki. A gleaming revolver was held in his hand, and, mounted on a tall horse, he blocked the road completely. It was Ted Strong! Ted Strong, the man Rossiter thought he had killed, who had remembered about the basin and ridden to it by a roundabout path, before letting his friends show themselves to the fugitives.

Rossiter reeled back in the saddle, but only for a moment. A wild scream of fear came from his lips. His horse turned as if on a pivot. His spurs sank deep into his sides and away he bounded down the mountainside with the speed of a deer.

Hendricks tried to follow him, but, even as he wheeled, the revolver which Ted Strong held in his hand flashed and spoke. With the crack, the horse fell in an ugly, lumbering heap, pinioning Hendricks under it. When the other cowboys came up, Ted Strong had handcuffed him, and Rossiter had disappeared amid the trees which fringed the lower slopes of the mountain.

"No chase after him, boys," said Ted. "We have no warrant for his arrest. We have the man we came for, and I guess we have come to the end of the trail."

THE END.

In the next issue of the BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY, No. 279, a new serial by Edward C. Taylor will commence. It is another thrilling story of prairie life in the West, entitled, "The Last of the Herd." This issue will also contain the news stories from all parts of the world.

COLONEL INSPECTS THE BAND.

A colonel in the French army who had a great eye for neatness, but not much of an ear for music, took occasion one day to compliment his bandmaster on the appearance of his men. "Their uniforms are neat," said the colonel, "their instruments are nicely polished and kept in order, but there is one improvement that I must insist upon."

"What is it, colonel?"

"You must train your men, when they perform, to lift their fingers all at exactly the same moment and at regular intervals on their instruments; so—one, two; one, two!"

TOOK THE BOSS AT HIS WORD.

Two laborers were engaged to deepen a well which had become dry. One of them sent his mate down into the well, while he sat at the top and directed the work.

He first ordered the other man to "dig a bit on this side," then "dig a little more on that side," until the latter, tired of both the work and the orders, exclaimed: "You sit up there and use your tongue, while I have to do all the work!"

"One man here, giving directions," said the man at the top, "can do as much as ten men down there."

Thereupon his mate threw down his pick and climbed up beside the other man. "What are you doing here?" inquired the latter. "Two men up here," answered his mate, "can do as much as twenty down there."

BEEFSTEAK AND MATHEMATICS.

"If I cut a beefsteak in two," asked the teacher, "and then cut the halves in two, what do I get?"

"Quarters," returned the boy.

"Good! And then again?"

"Eighths."

"Correct. Again?"

"Sixteenths."

"Exactly. And what then?"

"Thirty-seconds."

"And once more?"

"Hamburger," cried the boy impatiently.

SHE WAS AN EARNEST TEACHER.

An earnest teacher who sought to give her pupils an understanding of English words was describing the advantage of suffixes. "We know," she said, "what 'danger' and 'hazard' mean; now add 'ous' to each word and give the meaning."

"Dangerous—full of danger; hazardous—full of hazard," said the class in concert, and Bobby raised his hand. At a nod from the teacher, he continued:

"And 'pious'—full of pie."

DOG TENTS IN ARMY? SURE.

"Charley, dear," said young Mrs. Torkins, "they have dog tents in the army, don't they?"

"Why, yes. You see, it's a sort of technical term——"

"You needn't trouble to explain. I guess I understand words of one syllable. What I wanted to say is that I'm glad our faithful four-footed friends are provided for. Only I suspect the S. P. C. A. made them do it."

BRIDE RETURNS SOME EGGS.

"I've brought back those eggs you gave me this morning," said the new bride, as she began to take the articles in question from her basket. "They're duck eggs."

"Duck eggs!" sneered the grocery boss. "You're mistaken, ma'am. I don't never sell no duck eggs."

"But I tested them," triumphed the matrimonial novice. "I dropped them into water and they floated."

GRACEFUL—LIKE AN ELEPHANT.

She—"They must be engaged. That's her fourth dance with him this evening."

He—"That's no sign."

She—"Isn't it? You don't know how she dances."

THE NEWS OF THE WORLD.

Promotion Concern Raided.

The business of the Alliance Tire and Rubber Company was described in advertising circulars sent out through Warren C. Daniel, Incorporated, promotion brokers, of 220 West Forty-second Street, New York City, as "keeping factories running twenty-four hours a day," as "turning away five hundred thousand dollars' worth of orders," and as "besieged by agents crying for Alliance tires and more Alliance tires."

Agents of the Associated Advertising Clubs of America, who visited the plant in Alliance, Ohio, reported they found one man at work on one tire, and in the basement a second man making repairs. As a result post-office inspectors raided the Daniel offices. The prisoners taken were Warren C. Daniel, head of the promotion concern, and Raymond N. Bond and H. P. Dowst, stock salesmen, on the charge of using the mails to defraud investors in the stock of the Alliance Company. The frauds are said to have aggregated one hundred and sixty thousand dollars. The prisoners were locked up in the Greenwich Street police station.

The Alliance Tire and Rubber Company, a Delaware corporation, is the successor of the Alliance Rubber Company. The old concern was capitalized for fifty-eight thousand dollars, and Milton Bejach, its president, held one share. Bejach engineered reorganization on a large scale and floated the second concern with a capital of two million five hundred thousand dollars.

About a year ago the Associated Advertising Clubs printed a circular quoting from literature used by Daniel in promoting the sale of Alliance Tire and Rubber stock and comparing it with reports from club investigators.

There were two factories pictured on the Alliance prospectus—the original plant and the "addition." Investigators found only the original plant, and the two lone workmen did not jibe at all with the prospectus' description of the Alliance as "an established, prosperous company, working at capacity and selling for top prices the best hand-made tire in America, with an output of seventy-five thousand annually, which is increasing by leaps and bounds."

The warning letter of the Advertising Clubs stated that eight hundred thousand dollars of preferred stock of the Alliance was turned over to the Daniel firm, with the understanding that the company was to get three dollars a share and that as a bonus Warren C. Daniel was given four hundred thousand dollars of common stock, and for services in the reorganization seventy-five thousand dollars of the preferred stock.

Assistant United States Attorney J. W. Osborne, junior, said he had telegraphed to Pittsburgh, asking the arrest of Milton Bejach, president of the Alliance Company. A dozen young women employed in the Daniel office were questioned at the Federal Building, and fifteen mail bags filled with promotion circulars were seized as evidence.

H. P. Dowst, arrested as a stock salesman, described himself as a "literature" writer. He gave his age as forty and his address 234 Abbey Road, Kew Gardens, Long Island. Bond is an Englishman, thirty years old, and lives at 215 West Sixteenth Street. Warren C. Daniel is thirty-nine years old and gives Little Falls, New Jersey, as his home. He is said to be a brother-in-law of N. F. Wilson, indicted for his connection with Emerson Motors.

The warning circular of the Advertising Clubs states that J. C. Shively, vice president; W. H. Christenson, secretary and superintendent, and John B. Pow, treasurer, opposed the contract made by Bejach as their president with Warren C. Daniel for promotion of Alliance stock.

Will Divides Seventy Million Dollars Among Relatives.

The Louisville Trust Company and the Fidelity & Columbia Trust Company of Louisville, Kentucky, recently applied to the surrogates' court to be appointed ancillary administrators of the estate of Mrs. Mary Lilly Bingham. She was the widow of Henry M. Flagler, Standard Oil multimillionaire.

At the time of her death Mrs. Bingham was the wife of Judge Robert W. Bingham, of Louisville, Kentucky. She left an estate estimated at seventy million dollars, and nineteen States have a taxable interest in her holdings. Her will was filed in Florida and in Kentucky.

Published accounts of the will have previously stated that to Mrs. Louise C. Wise Lewis, niece, was left the bulk of the large estate. The will shows, however, that Mrs. Bingham's brother, William R. Kenan, junior, and her sisters, Jessie K. Wise and Sarah C. Kenan, will share the major part of the estate. They are each given five million dollars, equal shares in the Florida Railway and the Florida hotels of Henry M. Flagler, together with equal shares in the residuary estate.

Mrs. Louise C. Wise Lewis, niece, will receive two hundred thousand dollars a year until she is forty, and then get five million dollars principal. She also was given some real estate and all of her aunt's pearls. One pearl necklace is alleged to be worth a million dollars. To Judge Bingham, the husband, is left five million dollars.

Mrs. Bingham left all her Standard Oil stocks to her sisters, Mrs. Wise and Miss Kenan. The shares of stock in the various Standard Oil companies owned by Mrs. Bingham, with their estimated value, follow:

Standard Oil Company of New York, \$2,964,000; Indiana, \$2,228,000; New Jersey, \$8,688,000; California, \$1,378,350; Ohio, \$225,000; Nebraska, \$67,500; Kentucky, \$102,000; Kansas, \$436,000.

Mrs. Bingham named her brother, William R. Kenan, junior, and W. A. Blount as executors and trustees, but they renounced in favor of the banks as administrators.

American Ship Sunk Off Mexican Coast.

The American steamer *Olympic*, owned in New Orleans, Louisiana, foundered during a heavy gale recently about ninety miles off Puerto Mexico. A cablegram was received announcing the loss, saying one lifeboat containing eight of the crew was missing and was believed lost.

Captain John A. Nelson, of San Francisco, with twelve of the crew, reached Puerto Mexico in a lifeboat the day after the wreck. The missing lifeboat was in charge of John B. Cefaln, purser and a stockholder of the company owning the steamer. Vessels have been sent in search of the missing boat.

The *Olympic* was bound from Frontera to Puerto, Mexico. She was of twelve hundred tons, valued at two hundred thousand dollars, with a cargo worth two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Formerly she was in the Pacific trade.

Wrests Fortune from Wilds.

Forty years almost to a day from the time when he disappeared in the wilds of Mexico, Charles H. Stevens has reappeared, bringing with him a romantic story of capture by Navaho Indians and a comfortable fortune wrested from land which the ignorant natives are too lazy to make produce.

Stevens left a wife and four children in Old Town, Maine, when he and several companions went into Mexico in search of wealth and adventure. Surrounded by Indians, his comrades escaped and Stevens was captured. Back in Maine, however, it was believed he had been killed. His wife died a short time after that and his children were scattered among relatives.

Somehow Stevens escaped death at the hands of his captors, and after he had won their confidence he was proclaimed a chief and medicine man and accorded every privilege except that of liberty. Even that did not bother him after a year or two, and the constant espionage to which he was subjected was unnecessary, for he came to like the life amid the pleasant valleys hundreds of miles south of the American border.

He taught the Indians to cultivate their land, to hunt in new ways, and to cook in civilized style. In return they revealed to him many of nature's secrets, and incidentally a place where there was gold in abundance. The Navahos did not know the value of the gold and they regarded Stevens' careful gathering of what he could pick up as merely the oddities of a white man. In fact, the little children helped him to get several thousand dollars in this way.

At last there came the day when the Indians took Stevens with them on one of their periodical pilgrimages to Tombstone, Arizona, where they traded with the white men. Sight of his own people aroused feelings in Stevens that he long had believed dead, and to the captain of a troop of United States cavalry he revealed that he was a white man, and was taken from the Indians.

But civilization has lost its charm for him. Not even thought of the family he had left in Maine was sufficient to stir him. He knew they believed him dead, so he did not reveal that he was back lest it give them deeper pain when the time came, as he knew it would, that he would return to Mexico. So,

purchasing horses, he crossed the line again. With the gold he had picked up while with the Navahos Stevens bought from the Diaz government twenty thousand acres of land in the wildest and most remote portion of Chihuahua. It cost him seven cents an acre.

Great forests of mahogany and bay trees and other commercial timber covered most of the land, and much of the rest of it was ideal for grazing. There Stevens raised Hereford cattle and cut timber until a year or two Villa's bandits came along, raided the ranch, and carried off twenty thousand head. Still Stevens does not believe Villa is as bad as he is painted and does not hold him in the same detestation as other white men from Mexico.

Stevens discovered gold on his property before troubled conditions drove him out of Mexico. From one shaft alone he and George Cummings, his partner, took out seventy-eight thousand dollars in the precious metal. A boiler used in digging the shaft exploded and so seriously injured Stevens that he went to El Paso for treatment. When the raid took place he was shot and returned to the Texas city to stay until he recovered. His partner also was wounded, but made his escape.

Stevens now is living in Oregon on the Coos River. He does not believe Mexico will be safe for a good many months yet, so he proposes to rest easy and live contentedly until he can return.

Baby Escapes Death in Laundry Boiler.

When the employees of a laundry in Detroit, Michigan, were preparing to throw a wagonload of soiled laundry into a vat of boiling water, the cries of a three-months-old baby boy suddenly halted them. The baby was found in the mass of clothing.

Meanwhile, police headquarters was notified by Mrs. George Cole that her baby had been kidnaped from her front steps.

Mrs. Cole explained that every Monday she placed a basket of soiled linen on the steps for the laundry man to collect. On this occasion the baby was placed on top of the laundry for an airing.

The baby worked its way down under a sheet, and when the collector arrived he picked up the basket, tossed the laundry and baby into a heap of linens in the wagon, and drove on.

Horse Breaks Through Asphalt.

Water from a break in a sixteen-inch main undermined the asphalt on Central Park West between One Hundredth and One Hundred and First Streets, New York City, one day recently, and about four-thirty p. m. a horse drawing a light delivery wagon dropped through the pavement into a pool of water. The animal was extricated without injury.

The water ate its way under the street and also into the park, saving cellars from flooding. Emergency men from the water department propped up the sidewalk, traffic was stopped and pedestrians were barred from the east side of the street.

When the German submarine U C-5 was being transported to the sheep meadow in Central Park a week previously, it nearly met disaster in the same spot. A derrick was needed to pull the dray wheels out of holes into which they had sunk to the hubs.

Oil Driller's Experiences.

The profession oil-well driller is a real "globetrotter." In every oil field in Oklahoma are men who have drilled wells for oil in many strange places.

In any drilling outfit there is likely to be a man who has drilled wells in the far interior of China, in Burma, in Russia, in Chile, in Canada, or in other far distant places, and many of them have had queer adventures.

Such a man is B. W. Savage. He has been drilling oil wells for sixteen years. His most exciting adventure was when he sank the first well in the Tampico district in Mexico and brought in the greatest oil well in the world and thus discovered the richest known oil field. In a recent interview he tells as follows of that experience:

"I went to Mexico for the Standard Oil Company to help drill a well at a point three miles from Tampico. Geologists for the Standard Oil Company had said there was oil there, but that it lay very deep beneath the surface. The Standard goes altogether on what its geologists say, and it never puts down a well where its geologists say there is no oil. The geologists said we would have to go down at least four thousand feet at this point, and that is mighty deep, let me tell you. The deepest well in Oklahoma is three thousand two hundred feet.

"Well, we set up our rig and began drilling. We went down through layers of stiff clay and then through two thousand feet of limestone shell rock and through several veins of coal. We passed through blue shale and a white soda formation, through granite, sulphur, and at four thousand feet we went through a layer of gypsum, and then ten feet of rock, then a hundred and twenty feet more of gypsum, and then blue shale, and at four thousand three hundred feet we were in hard limestone shell rock again. We had been thirty-one months drilling to that depth because of accidents and delays, and we were all sick and tired of the job. To that depth the well had been as dry as a bone, not a sign of oil; and each one of us, accustomed as we were to getting oil at much shallower depths, had become firmly convinced that this was a duster.

"We were sending daily reports to the Standard Oil headquarters in New York and were expecting every day to get orders to abandon work. But no such orders came, and we kept on plugging away in a listless sort of way. H. T. Warner was the afternoon drillman and I came on at midnight. One night when I came to work I asked him:

"Any word from New York yet?"

"No, none."

"Are they going to keep us in this place until we drill through to China?" I asked.

"We both cursed the geologist who had said there was oil here. But it was my duty to keep on drilling, and so I hitched on and went at it. We were down then four thousand five hundred and sixty feet and were in a black shale.

"About two o'clock that morning, as I sat with my back against a post, smoking my pipe, watching the wire rope going up and down, and listening to the chug that came up from below, I thought I detected a slight odor of gas. I put out my pipe and stopped

the drill, got down on all fours, put my face close over the casing, and smelled. I could plainly get the odor of gas now, and I noticed that the gas coming out of the casing head carried with it minute particles of oil. Running my hand along the under side of the planking near the casing, I got a stain of oil where the gas had sprayed it.

"I sent for Mike Donahue, the superintendent in charge of the work, and after examining the well he said to keep on drilling. Before we could start the drill again we heard a loud, blowing noise down in that hole, nearly a mile deep, and the wire rope began to pile out of the hole. I started the engine to wind up the rope, but it all came out of that casing like a shot out of a gun. The drill, weighing two thousand six hundred pounds, and ten thousand pounds of wire line came out and shot up two hundred feet, and with it came a spout of oil that rose straight into the air two hundred and fifty feet.

"That oil spouted that way for forty days and forty nights, a second deluge, and all the time we were trying to cap the casing and close it down. The oil overflowed all the surrounding low land for miles, and we hired hundreds of peons at a dollar a day to build dams to hold it. There was a creek near the well, and the oil ran into that and down it, a regular river of oil. The peons would throw an earthen dam across the creek and lead the oil off into low ground, and when this was filled they would build another dam lower down and do the same. There were a dozen dams for miles along the creek. All the time the well was spouting and roaring and we were working to shut it off; and at the same time gangs of workmen were putting up tanks to hold the oil.

"At the end of forty days we succeeded in getting a cap on the well casing, with pipes leading off into steel tanks, and the gauges on those pipes registered seventy-four thousand barrels of oil in the first twenty-four hours after it was tamed. That well is still flowing two thousand barrels a day.

"That was the opening of the Tampico oil field, the greatest in the world. That was then the deepest oil well in the world, but I understand that now a company that makes drilling apparatus is putting down a hole at Bradford, Pennsylvania, just to see how deep it can go with its rigging, and that hole is nine thousand four hundred feet, nearly two miles deep, and still going deeper.

"After drilling the Tampico well I helped put down three more, one of them three thousand eight hundred feet deep that produced one hundred and eight thousand barrels a day.

"I was drilling there two years ago when Carranza grabbed up every American he could lay his hands on and slapped us all in the jail at Tampico because the United States government would not recognize him as president. There were three hundred and fifty of us in jail at once, and we stayed there seventeen weeks. They fed us once a day and we suffered terribly. They robbed us of all we had. They took from me a six-hundred-and-fifty-dollar gold watch with diamond settings which had been given me by R. J. Rosenberger, of Arkansas City, Kansas. I was drilling a well for him near that town, and he said if I brought in ten million feet of gas or fifty barrels of oil a day

in the well he would give me the best watch he could buy. The well went to three thousand four hundred and fifty feet and he got twenty million feet of gas and he kept his promise about the watch. Some greaser is wearing it now.

"The American women who were thrown in jail were released in six days, but the men stayed on. In February, 1915, I was released."

St. Louis Becomes World's Fur Center.

While the great world war has played havoc with many of the commercial industries of all nations engaged in it, and its disturbances have even been extended to many countries that still are neutral, it has resulted in St. Louis becoming the capital of the world's fur trade. During the time of trouble and upheaval in other lands St. Louis has built up a great fur market that is bound to meet and withstand all competition in this line of industry that may come with the time of readjustment which the end of the war is likely to bring.

The rapid strides St. Louis has taken in the world's fur trade have been made through the great market established there by the open auction sales that take place three times a year, and which to-day take precedence over and beyond all raw fur sales wherever held throughout the globe.

With the demoralization of the European fur marts because of war, with the fur trade of Germany ruined because of blockade—for Germany has never been a fur-producing country—with the London marts diminished because submarine warfare prevented delivery of furs from other countries—for England is not to be reckoned among the fur producers any more than Germany—it was in the nature of things that the world's requirements in furs should needs be filled somewhere.

And the old-established market at St. Louis made the bid with all the force and impetus with which Americans habitually launch new projects or employ to develop older ones.

The fur trade has long been a wealthy one, but in the estimates of national wealth somehow or other the fur trade and traders did not figure at all prominently. And yet the furs of the United States are among the natural sources of wealth that make for more prosperity, for better trade, and keep more money in circulation than many others more highly thought of.

When the United States paid some seven million dollars for Alaska there were plenty of complaints that it was rash extravagance to pay such a huge sum for the acquirement of territory that was mostly barren waste of rock and snow lands. Political economists figure that Alaska has more than paid for itself in furs alone since we acquired it, and that estimate takes no account of the mineral wealth we gained with that purchase.

From the far ends of the earth the international parcel-post system, the big express companies, and the interlocking freight system developed and patronized by the companies who make international shipments their exclusive business—from all of these have come the raw materials that are sold in St. Louis, and from there are distributed to the many centers of

the fur dyeing and dressing industry, to reappear in the fur-manufacturing centers that now supply the world's markets at both wholesale and at retail.

At a recent auction sale at the Funsten Fur Exchange it was estimated by one of those commercial experts whose reports command attention that there was represented on the selling floor at one time a purchasing power of more than twenty million dollars. At that sale one hundred million dollars was paid for pelts by the various buyers.

With these sales three times a year—spring, autumn, and midwinter—with the greatest of European buyers either present in person or buying through recognized brokers, St. Louis can justly claim the title of "fur capital of the world."

Tarantula Army on a Hike.

Have you ever seen an army of tarantulas traveling down a road or across a stubble field? Did you ever see an army of them out in battle array?

Frank Nelson Rust, of Hayes Avenue, Los Angeles, California, has seen such a spectacle and is much concerned with the destination of such a troupe. In seeking information on the subject he says:

"Just at dusk, in driving from Los Angeles to Pasadena, at a point near the town of Oneonta, I ran upon a great body of tarantulas. The soil over which they were traveling is adobe and they were headed in a northerly direction. There were thousands of them occupying a width of some twelve feet while the length of the 'army' was not discernible, simply a black mass of them in either direction.

"Until quite recently I have never met with any one who had encountered any such army. In this case a resident of Orange County writes me of such an encounter. He writes: 'The army of tarantulas was on the march northwesterly over a large stubble field, crossing the road on which we were driving, just at dusk. I should judge that we traveled through them for at least a mile.'

"It is quite a common occurrence to see armies of ants traveling in this manner and especially so on the desert. Professor Charles A. Kofoid, of the State University, tells me of seeing in India many instances of enormous numbers of the daddy-long-legs, which are distant relatives of the spiders, gathered in huge masses under sheltering ledges on the hillsides, in cavities in trees, and by the roadsides. These are sometimes several square yards in area, and when the animals were disturbed they would scatter and travel, often to a considerable extent, but I never saw them normally on the move.

"An acquaintance recently told me of seeing in South Africa a great army of chimpanzees traveling in a great body with the young and the females gathered in the center of the army and in this way entirely surrounded by the stalwart males. That they had a leader and a great number of what appeared to be guards surrounding the army proper and that observers were especially careful not to be seen by these outriders as it were.

"What I am interested in is to know why an army of tarantulas assemble in this way, where they go, and if they ever come back."

Newark's New Shipbuilding Plant.

A huge shipbuilding plant within sight of the tops of New York City's high buildings is being rushed to completion in Newark Bay so that a large number of vessels may be turned out quickly to help carry supplies to Europe for the American army there and for the allies.

Men are wanted now to build the vessels. Twelve thousand steel workers are needed and needed badly. Every effort will be made to procure them, so that the vessels may be built and put into commission in record time.

The new shipbuilding plant is being constructed by the United States Emergency Fleet Corporation, for which the Submarine Boat Corporation is agent. In a statement by the latter corporation is the following:

"Ships are as necessary to bring the war to a successful end as money and men. Without ships the soldiers in France cannot be supported. Without ships the allies cannot be fed. To build the thousand ships ordered by the government so urgent has the demand for men—steel workers—become that the United States Shipping Board and the Emergency Fleet Corporation are trying in every way possible to impress upon steel workers the necessity for helping in this big work for the country. A war committee will issue badges to the workers in the shipyards to be worn by them as emblems of patriotic, faithful service rendered to the nation in time of war."

The War Shipping Committee of the Chamber of Commerce in the United States has prepared a poster which tells of the emergency for men to build the vessels. The poster is in colors, shows a vessel in process of construction, and has the following call:

"If you can use tools, you are wanted. Your country needs ships and men to build them. Armies, munitions, and supplies are useless in this country without ships to transport them. Go to the nearest shipyard and offer your services. You can thus help to win the war and make the world safe for democracy."

In the meantime the shipbuilding yard in Newark Bay is growing rapidly. Here, standardized fabrication methods are to be used for the construction of steel cargo vessels. This method of fabrication was suggested to the United States Shipping Board by Henry R. Sutphen, and after mature consideration by the Shipping Board, the government furnished money necessary to build yards in different parts of the country, where these vessels are to be constructed of structural steel, similar to the way the big skyscrapers, the bridges, big gas tanks, et cetera, are erected. All parts are to be made in quantity at the steel mills and shipped to these yards, where they will be erected rapidly and the vessels turned out. Sutphen has had much experience in building by these standardized methods.

The great advantage of the Newark Bay plant is that it is within the metropolitan district, where there are seven million inhabitants, and the steel workers, who in the past have been a roving crowd, carrying on their work in one city and then in another and moving to all parts of the country, will be able to

settle in their homes in the City of New York, where they can have comfort, some pleasure, and live more economically than in any other city. This yard will employ twelve thousand men, and they will be drawn from New York, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and parts of New Jersey. The location of the yard makes it easy of access, and the railroads will run right to the plant.

Henry R. Carse, for many years prominent in banking circles and now president of the Submarine Boat Corporation, which acts as the agent of the government in the management of the yard, is devoting all his time to bring the work to a successful end. The general manager of the yard is B. L. Worden, who was president of the Lackawanna Bridge Company. He is one of the most experienced engineers on bridges and structural work in the country, and has given up all other interests to build vessels. George T. Horton, who was president of the Chicago Bridge and Iron Company, is another engineer who has given up his interests in other concerns in order to devote all his time to the work that is to be done on Newark Bay. Daniel H. Cox will be the resident engineer and constructor, representing the Emergency Fleet Corporation, and, in addition to these men, many capable engineers have been secured to carry on the big work.

The vessels to be built are of five thousand tons. Some criticism has been made that they will be too small and too slow, but it is argued that to build larger vessels and faster vessels would take much longer time. The crying need now is for steamships, and these five-thousand-ton craft will fill the present want, and they are so designed that they will be staunch, safe, and economical vessels, so that when the war is over they will be well adapted to carry trade of this country to all parts of the world.

The plant of the Submarine Boat Corporation is rapidly growing on a piece of property that fronts Newark Bay, just opposite Bayonne, and it is well suited for shipbuilding.

The contract for the building of fifty vessels of five thousand tons each was signed by the United States Shipping Board last month. It will be followed by another for one hundred and fifty more vessels. The keels of these vessels, which are to play such an important part in carrying supplies to the allies and to the American soldiers in France, will be turned out at the rate of one vessel every three days. The first keel will be laid on December 1st and others will follow rapidly, until twenty-eight steel vessels are under construction at the same time. Then as soon as one vessel is launched another will take its place on the ways.

At present work is being rushed on the erection of the plant where this fleet is to be built. The site is known as the Port Newark Terminal and is part of the City of Newark. The water front is on Newark Bay, which connects with upper New York Bay through the Kill von Kull, and there is ample water from shipyard to sea for vessels of reasonably deep draft. The shipyard occupies one hundred and twenty-five acres of land, and in it will be fifteen miles of standard gauge railroad tracks connecting the many shops, slips, and ways. These tracks will

connect with the Pennsylvania and Lehigh railroads and the Central Railroad of New Jersey, so that there will be no trouble about transportation and bringing the thousands of tons of steel parts to the yard direct from the steel mills and bridge shops where the material is now being rolled and fabricated.

On one side of the property is a slip seven hundred feet wide and a completed wharf four thousand four hundred feet long by fifty feet wide, on which three lines of tracks are laid, where large vessels may be moored. On the front of two thousand seven hundred feet are twenty-eight sets of building ways now being built, and the sound of the pile driver is music to those who are interested in the marine construction. These ways are in sets of two. There are to be twenty-eight fixed steel derrick towers, founded on piles, each equipped with two or more steel derricks, and forward of the ways are to be fourteen guyed derricks. These derricks, with the building ways adjoining, will make an imposing picture from the water front and give some slight idea of the immensity of the undertaking.

The whole property has been well laid out and the avenue crossed by streets, which are already paved, and underground are water mains and a complete sewerage system. The buildings are of steel and concrete construction. They are substantially built, but are simple in design. Everything is being done to make the plant up to date in every detail, but nothing is being wasted. Standardization is the main idea of the engineers planning this work, and in every possible way time and labor will be saved.

The whole arrangement of the shops has been with the idea of efficiency. The material will practically be brought into the yard at one point and the vessels when complete will leave at another.

The buildings now being erected are numerous. They include an administration building one hundred and ninety-six feet long, a hotel and restaurant ninety by seventy-five feet, two fabrication shops three hundred and sixty feet long, a terminal building, a hospital, two garages, two principal storehouses for the fabricating plant, three paint storage buildings, a storehouse for heavy machinery thirty feet long, a machine shop, an office building, a main substation and meter house, a substation, a transformer station, an engine house, a yardmaster's office, an oil storage building, several cottages for emergency employees and a small office and covered platform for team deliveries.

In addition there will be bins for rivet and bolt storage and other buildings. There will be twenty locomotive cranes of from fifteen to twenty-five tons capacity, with booms thirty to seventy-five feet long. There are to be fourteen electrically driven compressors, each of sufficient capacity to supply air tools for two hulls. There will be tugs to handle the hulls, a patrol and dispatch boat, ferryboats and automobile trucks and passenger cars.

By next spring these vessels will be ready for their cargoes, and will replace those that have been sunk by submarines.

All the machinery in this yard will be driven by electric power, and is the most modern that can be

obtained. The tools, too, are of the latest pattern and the equipment will be better and more complete than is to be found in any other shipyard.

Boy Burglar Tells of Plot.

Samuel Regensburg, of Belmont Avenue, the Bronx, is dead; his brother Harry, of Park Place, Brooklyn, is dying in the Jewish Hospital with two bullets in his breast; and his wife, Jennie, is in a critical condition in the Swedish Hospital with six bullet wounds in her body. They were the victims of three youthful burglars who recently attempted to rob the home of Harry Regensburg.

Hugh Davis, seventeen, of Prospect Place, Brooklyn, one of the young would-be robbers, also is in the Jewish Hospital, a prisoner, with five bullet wounds in his body, and is expected to die. Two others under arrest are Leon Davis, brother of Hugh, twenty-three, married, living in Providence, Rhode Island, and Paul Chapman, sixteen.

Hugh Davis and Chapman are well known in the Bedford section of Brooklyn, and heretofore have borne excellent reputations. Chapman was formerly a choir singer in St. Bartholomew's Church, Pacific Street and Bedford Avenue.

According to the story told by Chapman, Hugh Davis overheard Harry Regensburg telephone to his brother that he had four hundred dollars for him, and then "went after it."

"At nine o'clock Sunday night," the boy told the police, "I met Hugh Davis at Bedford Avenue and Bergen Street. We went to an ice-cream parlor at Bergen Street and Rogers Avenue and had a soda. Hugh asked me to meet him with his brother on the uptown side of the Cumberland Street station of the Fulton Street elevated at eleven-thirty. I was there promptly on time and met the brothers. We took a Brighton Beach train, and, alighting at the Park Place station, went through the cellar and into the rear yard of 636 Park Place."

The address is a cigar and stationery store in the rear of which Harry Regensburg and his wife and their six-year-old son Irving lived.

The burglar trio jimmied their way in through a window. They carried an atomizer filled with chloroform, but in attempting to administer it they awakened the Regensburgs. Harry and his wife jumped from bed and grabbed the intruders.

According to Chapman, Milton then drew an automatic pistol and began to fire. Samuel, who had come to his brother's rescue, was instantly killed. Then Milton Davis and Chapman dashed to the roof. Leon escaped through the rear yard. Milton climbed into the dumbwaiter and started downstairs, thinking to get out through the cellar.

The shots had attracted Lieutenant Sharkey, of the Grand Avenue station, who called Policemen Skala, Steele, and Barry. Milton Davis became stuck in the dumbwaiter in the cellar and refused to come out when the police commanded him. The police then began to fire. Mrs. Regensburg identified Milton Davis as the youth who had done the shooting.

Leon Davis was arrested in his brother's bed. Chapman was taken in a paint store at 1514 Fulton Street.

Regensburg slept while the fight was going on.

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